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# Jewish Environmental Studies: A New Field

**Manfred Gerstenfeld**

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In 1989 Daniel Elazar wrote: "Jewish political studies is a neglected but extremely significant dimension of Jewish life that needs to be explored."[1] The same can be said, even more emphatically, of Jewish environmental studies.

Jewish environmental studies do not yet exist as an academic field. There are no chairs or regular university courses in this discipline. No specific journals are devoted to it. The body of literature is growing rather slowly. The debate of the past few decades on the attitude of Judaism toward the environment has been largely unstructured. It reflects a wide range of views from "catastrophists" to "contrarians." Most of the basic texts on the interaction between Judaism and environmental issues have yet to be written. Very few scholars spend a substantial part of their time on the subject.

## Understanding the Jewish Environmental Tradition

All this needs to be seen against the background of a Jewish tradition rich in references to what we now call "environmental" concerns. The Bible, Talmud, Midrash literature, rabbinical responsa, and many other classical Jewish sources contain tens of thousands of scattered allusions to the subject.

Systematic study in this field will thus yield many additional important insights for better understanding of the Jewish tradition in general, and its environmental aspects in particular. If such study advances further, its findings may gradually

begin to influence Jewish attitudes toward the environment. At a later stage, it could have some impact on public environmental policy in Israel.

Research about environmental issues in the Jewish tradition is especially important against the background of developments in the past few decades, during which modern environmentalism has permeated Western society. It is actively propagated by currents and individuals who consider protection of the ecosystem[2] or environment[3] a major goal of every community, from the global to the local. Environmental concern has become a central theme in society, and is a vital issue for consideration in public policy.

Many governments, Israel among them, now include a ministry for the environment. International institutions such as the United Nations devote much time to the development of environmental policies. A large number of conferences on a broad spectrum of environmental subjects take place every year. The media throughout the Western world, and often elsewhere as well, carry multiple environmental items. Although environmental studies is a relatively new field, many chairs and courses at universities are devoted to it.

## A Unique Approach

There are several important reasons why the development of Jewish environmental studies as a separate field is desirable. Judaism has a unique approach to many of the key issues which preoccupy both environmentalists and environmental scholars. These include matters such as the sustainability of life on earth, the relationship of man in general and the Jew in particular to nature, and the prevention of nuisance and pollution. Judaism also has specific approaches to other major environmental elements such as the use of natural resources, and the allocation of space.[4]

The interaction between Judaism and the environment includes religious, philosophical, sociological, political, economic, and cultural aspects. The multiple facets of the subject and the extreme dispersion of references to it require a consolidated, systematic approach for a better understanding of what Judaism has to say about it, particularly as we are not dealing with a niche area, but with a broad field which concerns an issue -- protection of the environment -- which should be of major importance to all mankind.

There is another strong reason for promoting Jewish environmental studies and consolidating them within a single discipline: religious interest in environmental issues is on the rise worldwide. This is leading to frequent interfaith discussions, in which Jewish opinions play a role.

Many religious leaders feel that they cannot stay out of a field which generates

so much interest. One such prominent figure is Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, the spiritual leader of an estimated 300 million Orthodox Christians around the world. He has made protection of the environment an official policy of his patriarchy, calling pollution a "sin" against creation.[5]

Furthermore, international institutions have started to understand that religious authorities may be important allies in the struggle for better environmental care. This is especially important in the post-modern, secular Western world, in which every individual has his personal reasons for caring or not caring about various aspects of the environment. Institutionalized religions have more possibilities to unite part of their followers behind consolidated values.

**The Need for a Clearer Jewish Voice**

There are many signs of the increased interest in the interaction between religion and the environment. From 1996 to 1998, a series of conferences was held at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University about the attitude of various faiths toward the environment. A follow-up conference took place at the United Nations in October 1998.

In 2000, the United Nations Environmental Program, together with the Interfaith Partnership for the Environment, published *Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action* which is described as "an effort to continue the dialogue between the scientific and faith communities."[6] This book also contains a number of rather superficial remarks, and some quotations from classical Jewish sources. Journals are being established in which attention is given to the environmental understanding of religious traditions.[7] In the United States, Jewish organizations are an integral part of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, whose director, Paul Gorman, is Jewish.

With the increasing number of interfaith discussions on the environment in several countries, and in view of the breadth of the Jewish environmental tradition, the Jewish voice needs to be heard not only more loudly, but, in particular, more professionally. An articulate position can only be formulated, however, if it is underpinned with a detailed analysis of traditional Jewish sources.

With regard to the potential development of the field of Jewish environmental studies, much can be learned from another, highly diversified area of study that is of deep concern to contemporary society. Simultaneously with "environment," in recent decades, "gender" has taken a strong hold on Western thinking. After the development of general gender studies, Jewish gender studies have followed rapidly, becoming a distinct discipline.

At the 1997 World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jewish gender studies was one of the most strongly represented subjects among the lectures, while this author was the only one to address environmental issues from a Jewish viewpoint.[8] At the next congress -- to be held in August 2001 -- an even broader range of lectures in Jewish gender studies will be offered. Against this background, the question is: why have Jewish environmental studies not expanded swiftly like general environmental studies?

## Signs of Emerging Interest

There are signs, however, of increasing interest by Jewish institutions in the subject of Jewish environmental studies. One milestone was the 1998 Conference on Judaism and the Natural World in the framework of the above-mentioned Harvard series.[9] A book summarizing the lectures presented there is due to be published in 2002.

University courses on the subject have been episodic, however, and not an ongoing part of any curriculum.[10] Over the past few years, this author has met quite a few Jewish students in the field of environmental studies, mainly from outside Israel, who have expressed interest in learning about the Jewish environmental tradition, were such courses available.

Jews have been prominent in general environmental organizations for a number of years, particularly in the United States. Jewish environmentalist groups have also emerged. They have, however, produced little academic material relating to the Jewish interaction with the environment. A few sourcebooks contain some interesting articles of a more general nature.[11]

Jewish environmental activists, however, tend to be unfamiliar with the main contemporary publications in the field, and have only a rudimentary understanding of the multifold aspects of environmental concern in the Jewish tradition. Such activists would be well-served with more solid sources of Jewish environmental knowledge. This is another reason why Jewish environmental studies should be consolidated in a single field.

## Israeli Developments

In Israel, activities concerned with the Jewish environmental tradition have also been sporadic. Over the past five years, the Jerusalem College of Technology (Makhon Lev) has intermittently organized lectures on the subject for both its students and the general public. In 2000, it established a Center for Judaism and the Environment, the first such establishment affiliated with an academic institution. At four symposia it organized at the beginning of 2001, the magnitude

of how much work needs to be done to develop a broad range of operational inputs for environmental action from a Jewish point of view became clear.

At Touro College, a course on Judaism and the environment began a few months ago in the framework of Business Administration Studies, taught by Naftali Rothenberg. In 1998, the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies published this author's overview of Jewish-environmental interaction, and has occasionally hosted lectures on the subject.[12] In 2001 the Jerusalem Institute will publish this author's second book, on the Jewish environmental tradition.[13] In 1999, the Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership organized a number of meetings and a symposium on Jewish environmental issues.

Initiative has also been taken in the framework of traditional Jewish learning, to study specific Jewish sources in the environmental field. The Beth Midrash Torat Hayim was established last year in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Nof. This institute attempts to codify Jewish attitudes to the environment by grouping classical Jewish texts according to subject. If it develops further, their source material could be very helpful in providing the basis for academic analysis.

Two questions need to be asked: why has the field of Jewish environmental studies not yet taken off, and what should be done to accelerate it? With regard to the first question: environmental studies is an extremely fragmented field, making it difficult to obtain a general overview of it. Furthermore, the common terminology of the environmental sphere is not generally understood by those outside the field.[14] Few people with a reasonable knowledge of Judaism have a broad understanding of environmental studies, or vice versa. These two worlds of knowledge hardly meet.

Another cogent reason is that collecting and properly organizing the scattered source material will require much time and effort by qualified scholars: analysis can only begin after that has been accomplished.

With regard to the second question: the field needs a strong financial stimulus to enable interested institutions to develop better and wider scholarship in the field. This is something of a Catch 22: while the field is eminently teachable, there are precious few people who can teach it.

**The Structure of the Proposed Field**

How could such an academic field be structured? Due to its interdisciplinary character, it could have a place in both Jewish and environmental curricula. However, it is difficult to forecast when this is likely to happen. It makes little sense, at this early stage, to theorize much about where to locate it; this will mainly depend on which institutions initiate study programs. In view of this, and

the limited study material available, it is also too early to try to develop a detailed curriculum.

In the meantime, it may make more sense to categorize the research areas from a Jewish studies viewpoint. Ultimately, as more material becomes available, another segmentation may also develop which follows more closely the pattern of the disciplines in the field of environmental studies. The logic behind this is that students in environmental studies -- who will make environmental management a professional career -- will want to know what Judaism has to say about environmental care, and what that could mean for public policy.

The best initial approach would probably be to look at Jewish texts and attitudes toward the environment from various perspectives, using the methodology of environmental studies. Other facets also merit study, and a number of central areas of potential research can already be identified, some of which partly overlap. At such an early stage, however, this list cannot be exhaustive. Such categories could be:

- Jewish environmental history
- The environment in the Hebrew Bible
- The environment in later classical Jewish texts
- Jewish environmental thought, with particular emphasis on the Jewish perspective on nature and elements of it
- Jewish law and the environment
- Jewish environmental ethics
- Environmental-economic interaction
- The attitudes of specific Jewish currents toward the environment
- Individual Jewish attitudes
- Jewish environmental activism
- External perspectives

At present the potential scope of these study areas and which subjects they could embody can be only approximately defined. The following sections provide some illustrations to clarify this.

**1. Jewish Environmental History**

The central question in the study of Jewish environmental history is whether Jewish communities over the ages related to the environment in a unique way, i.e., differently from non-Jews. In the Hebrew Bible, there are many indications that Jews did have such a specific behavior. This resulted in part from a number of important Jewish environmental laws.

The Jewish environmental law most frequently mentioned by contemporary authors is the prohibition against wanton destruction *(bal tashhit).* This

commandment is often considered the cornerstone of the Jewish approach to environmental issues. Among the many other biblical environmental laws are *tsa'ar ba'alei haim* (not causing animals pain), the commandments of *shmitah* and *yovel* (sabbatical and jubilee years), and the maintenance of green space around the Levite cities.[15]

Jewish law continued to develop in the Mishna and Talmud, and later in the responsa literature. It is known that stricter environmental laws were applied in Jerusalem than elsewhere in the Land of Israel. For example, the Talmud prohibits erecting a dung-heap, building a kiln, or raising chickens in the Holy City. It was equally forbidden to leave a corpse in Jerusalem overnight.[16]

## Josephus Flavius and Onwards

Jewish historians provide additional insights into specific Jewish attitudes toward the environment. For instance, in the first century CE, Josephus Flavius relates that Herod collected many wild beasts and lions which were trained to fight with each other, or with men who had been condemned to death. Foreign spectators were delighted, but Jews considered it a serious breach of their tradition.[17]

Similarly, in his apologetic work *Against Apion,* Josephus refers to various environmental practices as being specific for Judaism. Besides some *halakhic* issues already mentioned in the Bible, he writes that Jews should be merciful to their enemies, and not burn down their land; he also says that animals that flee into houses should not be killed.[18]

The exile of the Jewish people changed more than their political condition alone. It must have meant that the attitude to environmental issues also changed, as Jews no longer had their own land and were exempt from those commandments linked specifically to the Land of Israel. This merits further investigation.

## The Middle Ages

The realities of the Jewish diaspora meant adapting to different conditions in various countries. In some of these, Jews were permitted to own and work the land. In thirteenth century Spain, for instance, the Castilian king Alfonso X[19] granted houses, vineyards, olive groves, fields, and mills in and around Seville to various Jewish officials of his court.[20] Many other examples of such ownership are also known elsewhere, and sometimes occasioned environment-related questions to rabbinical authorities.

Personal hygiene was a crucial matter during the plagues and epidemics of the Middle Ages. The relatively strict attention Jews gave to hygiene was probably

behind the low incidence of the Black Death in their communities. An example of such awareness is given in the testament of Eliezer of Mayence, who died in 1357: "Wash me clean, comb my hair, trim my nails, as I was wont to do in my life-time, so that I may go clean to my eternal rest, as I went clean to Synagogue every Sabbath day."[21]

## Separateness and Autonomy

The separateness and autonomy of Jewish communities throughout history created specific conditions which contributed to environmental attitudes that were different from those of the surrounding society. Anti-Semitism also influenced the Jews' behavior. For example, the Maharil,22 a leading fourteenth century rabbinical authority in Germany, recommended that Jews not throw food remnants to the fish in rivers. It would seem that the reason for this was that Jews in those days were commonly accused of poisoning rivers and wells.[23]

Additional information on Jewish attitudes in the Middle Ages and later eras can also be obtained from the responsa literature. Various responsa concerning the textile dyeing industry demonstrate that there was considerable awareness among the Jews of environmental problems. The Maharshach,[24] a sixteenth century rabbinical authority, was asked about the nuisance that the dyeing industry was causing to the inhabitants of a town. He judged that the economic interests of a city, dependent on the textile industry for its livelihood, take precedence over the damage caused to neighbors in the vicinity. He added, however, that the business owner would do well to reduce the hindrance as much as possible.[25]

In the seventeenth century, the prominent Italian rabbinical authority R. Shimshon Morpurgo of Ancona[26] issued a similar responsum, writing that Jews ought not to establish industries that cause environmental damage, and that those already in existence should ideally be moved further away. He added, however, that with the restriction of Jews' movements to specific quarters of cities, the community's economic survival would be in danger if such a removal were indeed carried out.[27]

## Hunting

Rabbinical responsa on hunting also illustrate specific Jewish environmental attitudes through the ages. Various *halakhic* authorities ruled against it. Upon being asked whether a Jew may hunt game for sport, the responsum of the prominent eighteenth century scholar R. Yechezkel Landau, known as the Noda biYehuda, was: "The only hunters mentioned in the Torah are Nimrod and Esau. Hunting is not a sport for the children of Abraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov....How

can a Jew go to kill a living creature only with the purpose of hunting for pleasure?"[28]

There is evidence, however, that some French and Italian Jews of the Renaissance period did go hunting: "Bonaventura da Volterra, having had a fortunate day's hunting in January 1471, sent his friend Lorenzo the Magnificent a buck and two fawns, and another present of the sort the following winter."[29] The issue was apparently still of concern some centuries later, as R. Morpurgo spoke out against this practice.[30]

These examples demonstrate that analysis of historic Jewish attitudes toward the environment will have to include sociological assessments. This is made even clearer in an anecdote related by the nuclear physicist Abraham Pais: "Hunting was something that never interested me in the least. As Einstein told me on a later occasion, Walther Rathenau, at one time Germany's foreign minister and a Jew, had once told him that when a Jew says he likes to hunt he is a confessed liar."[31]

## 2. The Environment in the Hebrew Bible

In the Bible, the normative, narrative, and wisdom texts hold much environmentally relevant information: the stories of Paradise, the Flood, the Ten Plagues, and the Manna all have significant environmental aspects.[32] The first twenty chapters of the Bible describe no less than five instances of environmental catastrophes and/or man's forced exile from his environment: respectively, the expulsion from Paradise, Cain's enforced wandering over the earth, the Flood, the dispersion of the builders of the Tower of Babel, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham and Lot's parting of ways contrasts religious sustainability with environmental and economic sustainability.[33] The message that man should carefully manage natural resources is strongly expressed in the story of the services that Joseph provides for Pharaoh. The Bible often relates that the Land of Israel is not a naturally sustainable society, but is dependent on rain, which in turn is dependent on the fulfillment of the divine commandments. Man's relation with nature fits into the theo-centric concepts of Judaism. The worship of nature is strongly and frequently condemned.

Among the many other environmental narratives in the Bible are the crossing of the Red Sea, Korach's death, and the fall of Jericho. The story of the prophet Jonah also contains many environmental facets.

Several times in the Bible, nature's normal pattern is changed in order to teach an individual a lesson; for instance, the burning bush for Moses, Balaam's talking

ass, the miracles requested by Gideon as proof, the ravens feeding of Elijah, and the curing of Na'aman's illness by the waters of the river Jordan.

### 3. The Environment in Later Classical Jewish Texts

The Mishna, Talmud and Midrash literature contain many references to environmental attitudes, with respect to both normative and behavioral issues. The Talmud includes a substantial number of cases which provide an insight into the attitudes toward the environment of the sages and the society in which they lived. The main elements of the modern discipline of environmental studies are addressed in various ways in these texts, as are elements of thought and basic motifs which we rediscover -- modified -- in the modern environmental discourse.

For example, classic Jewish texts frequently condemn conspicuous consumption and speak out against the culture of consumerism. It is written in the Talmud: "The rabbis said that the end of a sage who overindulges in elaborate meals everywhere will be that he destroys his house, turns his wife into a widow, makes his children orphans, forgets his studies, and quarrels abound around him."[34]

Asceticism -- withdrawal from the physical world -- is another of the many environmental aspects mentioned in the Mishna and Talmud. Scholars disagree, however, as to the extent to which this was an acceptable element of Judaism in the past, and in which circumstances.[35]

Many environmental motifs also appear in the Midrash literature. These refer to issues such as the importance of man's position in Creation, God's modification of nature, the relationship between abstract concepts such as sacredness and righteousness, and concrete issues such as decay, pollution, putrefaction, destruction, disease, death, and natural disaster.[36] Other themes concern maintaining biodiversity, man's relationship with animals, and tree planting. Little research has addressed these and many other issues which can also be found in later texts.

As aforementioned, the environmental elements of rabbinical responsa merit attention, providing both normative and behavioral facets for study. Mystical texts are another area yet to be explored, as is the liturgy.

### 4. Jewish Environmental Thought

Jewish environmental thought covers broad areas. There are many aspects to the relationship between Judaism and the natural world. Judaism is theo-centric and, as such, nature is an expression of God's majesty and a tool for the Creator to mete out punishment or reward and/or teach humans lessons. Beyond this

central concept, however, there is a place for more detailed study of nature's importance and its role in Jewish thought. It is striking, for example, that there is no word for "nature" in the Bible; the word *"teva"* is only introduced in the Middle Ages.

The medieval philosopher Bahya ibn Paquda discusses man's reflection on nature in his *Hovot ha-Levavot,* written around 1080. He believes that such reflection causes man to recognize God's existence as the Creator, and that we then see the world "as a built house, where everything needed is available. Heaven above is a ceiling. The land is stretched as a platform and the stars are ordered like lights. All bodies are gathered like treasures....and man as the owner of the house uses all that is in it."37

The position of nature in the worldview of Jewish thinkers has been investigated by several researchers. Eliot R. Wolfson has addressed the way in which it was perceived in medieval kabbalistic symbolism: "the pervasive attitude of the kabbalists toward the body of nature is quite typically andro- [anthropo-] centric in its orientation....Na-ture is not adored as a goddess; it is treated as that which must be conquered and subdued, not in the sense of abusing nature [but] in the sense of transforming the corporeality of nature and elevating it to the higher, spiritual level."38

The important philosophical issue concerning the relationship of Judaism to nature was dealt with in a responsum at the beginning of the eighteenth century. R. David Nieto,[39] of the Sha'arei Shamayim congregation in London, stated in a sermon that God and nature are the same. He called those who do not believe this heretics. Some of his congregants, however, considered his position heretical. The matter was brought before a leading rabbinical scholar of the time, Haham Zevi,[40] who discussed the issue with two colleagues:[41] they backed Nieto's stand.[42]

**Rabbi Avraham Kook**

More modern Jewish thinkers also address the relation of man and nature. Several scholars have analyzed R. Avraham Kook's[43] perception of nature. In Zvi Yaron's opinion, this view is based on the relationship between miracle and nature. He states that R. Kook believes that the causality of nature is not cancelled by miracles, but that miracles shed light on the divine laws which steer nature. Yaron adds that, in this approach, prayer links spiritual and sacred life -- i.e., "eternal life"[44] -- to natural life -- i.e., "living in the moment."[45]

Benjamin Ish-Shalom defines R. Kook's philosophy thus: "when speaking of nature, one must not attribute to it a set and defined essence in and of itself....According to this view, nature, in all its dimensions, including the spiritual

and material, the cosmic and cultural-historical, is a process of the revelation of God in the world, and man is perceived to be its pinnacle, the highest expression of this positive and optimistic divine-cosmic-natural process."[46]

According to Nahum Rakover, R. Kook's views on man's attitude toward nature may be examined from a variety of angles. For example, the adaptation of human life to nature's way is a worthwhile challenge for both the individual and man in general; however, this should not occur at the expense of higher-placed ideals, such as learning the Torah. Man's moral level and his attitude toward nature should correspond.47

In assessing Abraham Joshua Heschel's views on nature, Edward K. Kaplan concludes that he "couples his insistence that the divine essence is not one with nature with his equal insistence that the Shekhinah, God's exiled Presence, remains within the world."48 Kaplan adds that Heschel "deliberately includes nature in his understanding of divine concern. The animate world is precious to God. Heschel's scrupulous disavowal of pantheism again highlights God's priority and humankind's responsibility."49

In recent decades, Jewish thinkers such as Steven Schwartzchild and Michael Wyschogrod have expressed the belief that there are fundamental tensions between Judaism and nature. Moshe Sokol concludes, however, that "Judaism neither dislikes trees nor flowers themselves, nor does it stand in opposition to 'nature' as such. To speak simplistically of a 'conflict' between Judaism and nature is thus misconceived. Indeed, my sense is that the popularity of this way of thinking about the relationship between Judaism and nature is rooted more in the sociology of the Jews than in the beliefs they hold."50

**The Status of Animals**

Another subject meriting comprehensive research is Judaism's perception of the non-human elements of nature. A pivotal question here is -- in a theo-centric world -- to what extent their relationship to God is independent of man. Various Midrashic sources discuss the significance of the fact that man and other elements of nature were not created on the same day. In several biblical texts, animals are held responsible for their sins, such as the snake in the Paradise narrative, and the corrupt animals before the Flood.51

Maimonides is prominent among the classical Jewish thinkers who take a position on this issue. In the *Guide for the Perplexed,* he states: "that not the whole Creation exists for man, but that each element of nature exists for itself."[52] In Moshe Sokol's opinion, "Maimonides does provide us with a theological perspective on the natural world which promotes reverence and respect, since all species 'exist for their own sake' and were all intended by God's own will."[53]

The perception in Jewish thought of the boundaries between man and animal also merits analysis. Another aspect which has received only very limited attention so far is the role of particular animals in the Jewish tradition. Perceptions of various animals also differ greatly between societies.

One striking example is the contrasting image in Western society of the bear and the wolf, both predators. The first has a much more benign image, due in great part to Milne's character Winnie the Pooh, than the second, which is due to the stories recorded by the brothers Grimm, in one of which a wolf eats a grandmother. There is no such difference in perception between these two animals in the Jewish tradition.

Some research has been carried out on the image of dogs and cats at the time of the Talmud.[54] Among other animals whose image merits study is the raven, which has an ambivalent reputation.

### Other Elements of Nature

Similarly, the Jewish attitude toward elements of nature such as water and trees needs to be studied. At first sight, it may seem surprising to claim that Judaism has a specific vision of, for example, the sea. This can easily be proven by contrasting it with that of the Phoenicians. For them, it obviously represented an opportunity: they traveled over the sea in order to trade, found colonies, and increase their wealth. Navigating knowledge played an important role in their culture.

For the Israelites, seas and lakes were borders, places in which one could drown unseen and leave one's wife an aguna. There was little appreciation of navigation skills. In our days, the State of Israel thinks of itself as fighting with its back to the sea. Neither was there a place in Judaism for sacred springs or water gods.

The modern sustainability debate, and key elements of it, have to be studied from different perspectives in classical Jewish sources. This includes issues such as inter-generational equity, maintaining biodiversity, the destruction of resources, dematerialization, cycling and durability. This issue has been addressed, albeit in only a preliminary manner, by this author.55

Yet another issue of potential interest is to what extent there are references to environmental justice in the Jewish tradition.

## 5. Jewish Law and the Environment

The uniqueness of the deep-rooted concern of Judaism about the environment

derives from its normative character. Over the millennia, Jewish law has dealt with a large number of cases that we now call "environmental." As mentioned earlier, *bal tashhit,* the prohibition against wanton destruction, is an important law -- mentioned already in the Bible -- for defining the Jew's relationship to nature. *Tsa'ar ba'alei haim,* the prohibition against causing pain to animals, is another biblical law with broad applications.

The law of *kilayim,* prohibiting change to the constancy of species, is another example of *halakhic* protection of nature, and is especially relevant today, due to the proliferating discussion about genetic manipulation. Another important law is that of *yishuv ha'aretz* (settling the land).

With regard to the preservation of natural resources, the laws of *shmitah* and *yovel,* the sabbatical and jubilee years, entail important measures for preventing erosion and exhaustion of the land. The laws of the Levite cities, which have become binding for all other Jewish cities, provide instructions for preserving green areas around built-up zones. They deal with another central element of modern environmental concern: the allocation of space.

Many regulations for avoiding nuisance and pollution are detailed in the Talmud. We might call the Rambam's *hilkhot shkhenim,* the laws of the neighbors, the first Jewish environmental codex.

**Contemporary *Hala*khah**

There appear to be very few contemporary environmental responsa, though several rabbis have addressed some key issues. For example, the question of animal experimentation has received some *halakhic* attention. The prominent twentieth century rabbinical authority the Seride Esh, R. Yechiel Ya'akov Weinberg, permits these, as he believes that the elimination of human pain and suffering is more important than the prevention of pain in animals.56

Another authority, the Ziz Eliezer -- R. Eliezer Waldenberg -- also considers medical experimentation permissible; he stresses at the same time, however, that efforts must be made to minimize the animals' pain.[57]

Other contemporary responsa refer to the wearing of fur coats, attending bullfights, active and passive smoking, the destruction of surplus food in order to stabilize prices, the throwing of peeled nuts or loose sweets during a wedding or bar mitzvah, the use of vegetables as decorations in kindergartens, and the disposal of food leftovers from wedding halls.58

As rabbinic authorities provide further responsa¸ more contemporary *halakhah* will become available. This is a necessary instrument in the development of

Jewish environmental public policies. Among the questions to be asked one could include, for instance, whether saving water is a *halakhic* issue or whether it is a matter of Jewish environmental ethics.

## 6. Jewish Environmental Ethics

*Halakhah* prescribes the normative behavior of the Jew toward various environmental elements. This behavior often has an inherent ethical dimension, as is pointed out in *Sefer HaHinukh,* with respect to the prohibition of wanton destruction: "And this is the way the pious and the people of good actions behave, they like peace, are happy in the well-being of others, bring them closer to the Torah, and will not destroy even a mustard seed for the world."59

Furthermore, there is also an ethical dimension in Judaism which goes beyond the normative of the law. This is usually referred to as *milifnim leshurat hadin.*60

In some cases, ethical positions have become *halakhic* ones over the centuries. For example, the prohibition of wanton destruction seems gradually to have become more severe and much more broadly applied. The prevailing *halakhic* viewpoint is that nobody may destroy things wantonly, even if they are his own property.

Environmental ethics play an important role in the general environmental discourse. This also generates interest in Jewish environmental ethics. One field in which the normative and the ethical mingle is that of the attitude of Judaism toward vegetarianism. Rabbinical positions on this issue are quite diverse.61

The Midrash literature is a significant source of Jewish environmental ethics. The best-known example of this is the environmental Midrash that is most often quoted in modern writings on the subject: "God said to Adam: 'See my works, see how pleasant and good they are. Everything I have created I have created for you. Be careful not to spoil and destroy my world. If you do so no one will repair it.'"62

## 7. Environmental-Economic Interaction

Today the conflict between economic and environmental interests is of central importance in modern environmental public policies. On many occasions, the Mishna, Talmud and -- even more -- the responsa literature address this very issue. These texts may thus contribute to the establishment of a value hierarchy for decision-makers.

For example, it is written in the Mishna that one cannot open a bakery or a

painter's shop under somebody else's granary, nor erect a cow shed there. This is because the heat of the baker's or painter's ovens causes hindrance, as does the odor of cow dung.63

On the other hand, one is permitted to carry the dung of one's cattle to the public domain in order to have it trampled into compact units.64 Organic dung had great economic value in the agricultural society as a fertilizer; at the same time people suffered its stench. These two sources show that the *halakhic* attitude to the stench of dung takes both economic and environmental factors into account. In one case, the use of cow dung is prohibited; in another, the public is obliged to put up with the (olfactory) hindrance it causes.

### Wanton Destruction

With the development over the centuries of the prohibition of wanton destruction, clear economic benefits were required in order to allow, for instance, the removal of fruit trees. Another Talmudic reference to the prohibition of wanton destruction is the judgement from R. Zutra, who says: "Whoever covers an oil lamp [when it is burning] and leaves a nafta lamp open [when it is burning] transgresses the prohibition against wanton destruction."65

This text teaches us that this sage believes an uneconomical use of fuel to be forbidden for what we would now call "environmental" reasons, even if only one's own money is at stake. Although some research has been carried out on the subject of the historical development of the prohibition of wanton destruction, it requires further study.

Several other issues of environmental-economic interaction are discussed in the Talmud. One *takkana* (a rabbinical enactment in the public interest) established that one is not permitted to raise goats and sheep in the Land of Israel, because of the economic damage these animals cause to the vegetation. Modern *halakhic* authorities disagree to what extent this enactment is still valid in our time.66

Other texts deal with various issues of environmental nuisance such as heat, odor, or noise. The Talmud discusses when economic interests should take precedence over environmental ones, and vice versa. Other issues discussed concern the protection of resources. These issues are developed further in various rabbinical responsa.

## 8. Currents in Judaism

Various currents in Judaism have specific attitudes toward the environment. This subject partly overlaps with that of Jewish environmental attitudes throughout

history. It reflects the differences in Judaism as far as religious, national, and cultural thought are concerned. For example, in ancient times the Essenes' withdrawal to the desert, their asceticism, and their frequent use of ritual baths expressed such a distinctive attitude.

In more recent centuries, there is an obvious difference, for example, in the environmental outlook of Hasidism and Mitnagdim. Norman Lamm has elucidated this subject:

...while Hasidism does not directly declare nature as holy, it finds in it sufficient potentialities for the sacred to allow for a greater respect for and closeness to the natural world, while the Mitnagdic dualism so completely desacralizes nature as to leave it completely neutral and irrelevant religiously, to be viewed totally objectively and without any feeling of relationship whatsoever....For Hasidism, which is immanentistic, man has a kinship with other created beings, a symbiotic relationship with nature, and hence should maintain a sense of respect, if not reverence, for the natural world which is infused with the presence of God. The Mitnagdic view, emphasizing divine transcendance, leaves no place for such feelings, and conceived the Man-nature relation as completely one of subject-to-object, thus allowing for the exploitation of nature by science and technology and -- were it not for the *halakhic* restraints which issue from revelation, and not from theology -- the ecological abuse of the natural world as well.67

Many elements in the history of Hasidism indicate that it merits a distinct study. The movement's panentheistic view is central in its environmental tradition. One finds much concern for nature, and elements of it, in stories about various Hasidic leaders. Another environmental aspect is the withdrawal into nature of its founder, the Ba'al Shem Tov, and his grandson, R. Nahman of Bratslav.

On the other hand, the ostentatious wealth of the courts of some Hasidic rabbis -- and particularly the rabbi of Rozhin -- is also a subject of environmental relevance, as it seems to reflect conspicuous consumption and a lack of concern about saving natural resources.

**Differences in Contemporary Attitudes**

In contemporary Jewish society, ultra-orthodox communities have distinctive attitudes toward the environment. This field needs to be researched more fully. Sociological research is also required, in order to ascertain the motivation for the apparent attitude of the haredim toward environmental issues. Until such research has been carried out, such interpretation remains largely speculative.[68]

The attitude of Zionism toward the environment also has considerable potential for research.69 Some brief publications have been devoted to this subject, with a specific emphasis on the way in which Zionism relates to nature. The attitude of

the kibbutz movement toward nature is a subject apart.70 The distinctive attitude of the religious kibbutz movement toward nature and other elements of the environment also merits more detailed research.

The greatly diverging directions taken by American Jewish and Israeli interests in the Jewish environmental tradition is an important issue. The American approach often seems to be extremely individualistic; it tends to be focused on spiritual feelings. In Israel, much more attention is paid to analysis of classical texts and responsa material, and drawing conclusions from them.

## 9. Individual Jewish Attitudes

The environmental worldviews and attitudes of various Jewish figures should also be analyzed. Detailed attention has been paid to personalities as diverse as R. Avraham Kook71 and A.D. Gordon;72 in the works of many other prominent Jews, however, we also find indications of strong positions on environmental issues.

For instance, read with modern eyes, the following text from Herzl's *The Jewish State* sounds like a powerful anti-environmentalist statement: "If we were in the situation where we wanted to liberate a country from wild animals, we would not do it the way the Europeans did it in the fifth century. We would not go out with a spear and lance against bears, but rather organize a great pleasurable hunt, drive the animals together and throw a bomb under them."73

In Albert Cohen's reflections, the well-known French author of Greek origin considers it one of the great merits of his Jewish forefathers to have stood up against nature: "One very beautiful day, which was the glory of the universe, one of my ancestors, a being of Nature and a member of the animal species, decided crazily, decided ridiculously, on his two hairy and still twisted legs, on a schism: that he didn't want to belong any more to nature and obey its laws."74

Various paradigms of nature appear in the novels of Jewish writers. Bernard Malamud's *God's Grace,* a fable based on a second Flood from which only one human -- with the equivocal name of Calvin Cohn -- survives, is a particularly good example.75 Among Israeli authors, Meir Shalev refers several times to paradigms of the attitudes of Zionism to nature.76

## 10. Jewish Environmental Activism

Specifically Jewish environmental activism is much more common in the United States and Great Britain than in Israel. Shomrei Adamah,77 which has been active for more than ten years, is the best known of several Jewish

environmental activist groups in the United States.

In the past decade or so, the American Jewish community has begun to understand that it must address environmental issues more systematically.78 This led to the foundation in 1993 of COEJL, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, whose thirty participating organizations represent a wide range of the organized American Jewish community. COEJL's budget is very modest, however, compared to that of more established Jewish organizations.

Another indication of the still modest Jewish interest in the environment is a survey conducted in the United States in 1997 by the Center for Jewish Community Studies of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Jewish state legislators and Jewish community state government affairs professionals were asked which issues that they had dealt with in the last biennium they considered of major legislative relevance. Their responses contain scant mention of environmental issues.79

There have been a significant number of fragmented Jewish activist environmental initiatives in the United States. One recent example was a project of the non-profit organization Hazon, which organized a "Jewishly diverse group of riders" to cycle from Seattle to Washington, D.C., in order to raise environmental awareness in Jewish and other faith communities.80

What motivates Jewish environmentalists, the modes of their actions, and how their Jewish sensitivities relate to their environmental ones is worthy of increasing sociological research.

## 11. External Aspects

The interaction on environmental issues between Judaism and the external world has multiple facets. One of these is the ongoing comparative analysis of the attitudes of the different religions. Another is interfaith interaction.

Jews are increasingly being invited to take common positions with other religions on environmental issues. The proposed texts frequently refer to nature as sacred, a position which classical Judaism radically opposes.81

For instance, the United Nations Environmental Program recently published suggestions for a "celebration of earth and faith," and says, *inter alia*: "Draw from the holy words of your religion and other faith traditions in this book to create an Earth celebration service....With the help of your congregation, illustrate the sacred nature of creation and its desecration with images...displayed in your sanctuary."82

Norman Lamm has censured the practice of "co-opting the Bible as an uncritical ally of environmentalism. This latter trick is achieved by a strategy of putting their ideas into the mouth of the Bible. Thus, at the recent World Ecology Conference, it was maintained that all of nature is 'sacred'....There is something atavistically pagan about this worship of the earth; the first verse of the Torah immediately established the incommensurability of Creator and creation when it tells us that God created the heavens and the earth."83

**The Bible under Attack**

Another broad field of study concerns accusations that biblical texts justify the destruction of nature. There have been ideological accusations from various sources that the Jewish-Christian tradition has focused on subduing nature. The refutation of this criticism became a strong element in the early Jewish environmental discourse of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Even before the emergence of modern environmentalism as a mainstream movement in the West, American conservationist Aldo Leopold claimed that certain biblical passages had had a negative impact on the environment: "Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the impact of mechanized man, nor for us to reap from it the esthetic harvest it is, capable under science, of contributing to culture."84

One biblical text which has come under particular attack is Genesis 1:28: "God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.'"

**The "Spoliation of Nature" Debate**

Referring to the Jewish roots of the Christian attitude to this issue, American historian Lynn White, Jr., stated, in a much-quoted article, that this verse expresses the dualism of man and nature, and God's intention that man exploit nature for his benefit.85 While White did not specifically analyze the attitudes of Judaism toward the environment, he did make a few passing references to Judaism and one clear accusation: "Christianity inherited from Judaism not only a concept of time as nonrepetitive and linear but also a striking story of creation....God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes."86

White's article also generated many responses from various quarters, including a few from Jews. His accusations continue to be quoted in the "spoliation of nature" debate until the present day.87

Another subject of study of relevance in this area concerns the compatibility and tension between Jewish and environmentalist values. Several aspects of modern environmentalism inspire interest and/or caution in contemporary Jewish writers, particularly the neo-pagan positions of some environmental currents.

Similarly, neo-Nazi groups continue to propagate environmental theses. There are also striking similarities in the extreme approaches of some environmentalist groups to the Nazis' love of animals and nature combined with their hatred of certain human beings. Here, Jewish environmental studies intersect with those of anti-Semitism.88

## Conclusion

In the early stages of this emerging field, one of the greatest challenges for scholars in Jewish environmental studies will be to organize the abundant source material in an accessible manner. This will facilitate better analysis and the development of more detailed theories. After that, it will be easier to develop a balanced curriculum for the discipline.

However, the main key to the development of Jewish environmental studies seems to be the availability of financial resources for those institutions interested in the subject. *Inter alia,* this will enable scholars in the field to work together in compiling the basic texts of the Jewish environmental tradition.

### Notes

* The author is grateful to Peter Medding and Akiva Wolff for their comments.

1. Daniel J. Elazar, "Studying and Teaching Jewish Political Studies in the University," *Jewish Political Studies Review,* 1:3-4 (Fall 1989):1-11.

2. One definition of "ecosystem" is: "Ecosystems are the combination of populations of plants and animals, the interactions between them and their non-living surroundings."

3. The main environmental concerns are: protection of human health, protection and conservation of nature and natural resources, protection of animals, prevention of pollution and hindrance, and allocation of space.

4. See Manfred Gerstenfeld, *The Jewish Environmental Tradition: A Sustainable World* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, forthcoming) (Hebrew); and *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies,

1998).

5. Libby Bassett, ed., *Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action* (New York: Interfaith Partnership for the Environment/United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), 2000), p. 16. A number of symposia on religion, science and the environment have been held under the auspices of Bartholomew's patriarchy, resulting in two books: Sarah Hobson and Jane Lubchenco, eds., *Revelation and the Environment, AD 95-1995,* Patmos Symposium I, 20-27 September 1995 (Singapore: World Scientific, 1997); and Sarah Hobson and Laurence David Mee, eds., *The Black Sea in Crisis. Religion, Science and the Environment,* Symposium II: An Encounter of Beliefs: A Single Objective. 20-28 September 1997 (Singapore: World Scientific, 1998).

6. Bassett, *op. cit.*

7. For instance, *Worldviews.*

8. Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Developing a Broad Jewish Perspective on Environmentalism and Environmental Issues," Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, July-August 1997.

9. Conference on Judaism and the Natural World, 22-24 February 1998, Harvard University, Center for the Study of World Religions.

10. For instance, a course on Judaism and the environment has been taught -- for one semester -- at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

11. For instance, Marc Swertlitz, ed., *Judaism and Ecology 1970-1986: A Sourcebook of Readings* (Wyncote, PA: Shomrei Adamah, 1990).

12. Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.*

13. Gerstenfeld, *The Jewish Environmental Tradition: A Sustainable World, op. cit.*

14. Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Environment and Confusion* (Jerusalem: Academon, 1994).

15. Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.,* chapter 3.

16. Bavli *Bava Kama* 82b.

17. Josephus Flavius, *Judische Altertumer* (Halle: Otto Hendel, n.d.), Book 15, chapter 8:1 (German).

18. Josephus Flavius, *Gegen Apion,* in Josephus Flavius, *Kleinere Schriften* (Halle: Otto Hendel, n.d.), p. 183 (German).

19. Alfonso X (El Sabio) ruled from 1252 to 1284.

20. Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain,* vol. I (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), p. 112.

21. In Israel Abrahams, ed., *Hebrew Ethical Wills* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948), part II, p. 217.

22. The Maharil was born in Mainz in 1365, and died in Worms in 1427.

23. Daniel Sperber, *Israel's Customs: Sources and History* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1994), part III, note 23, p. 121 (Hebrew).

24. R. Shlomo Cohen, who lived in the Ottoman Empire and died in 1602.

25. Responsa Maharshach 2:98 (Hebrew).

26. R. Shimshon Ben Yehoshua Moshe Morpurgo, born in 1681 in Austria, died in Ancona in 1740.

27. Responsa *Shemesh Zedaka* on *Choshen Mishpat* 34:11, as quoted in: Meir Tamari, *With All Your Possessions: Jewish Ethics and Economic Life* (New York: Free Press, 1987), p. 295.

28. *Teshuvot* Noda biYehuda, *Yoreh De'ah,* no. 10 (Hebrew).

29. Cecil Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), p. 31.

30. Responsa Morpurgo ii.18 as mentioned in *ibid.*

31. Abraham Pais, *A Tale of Two Continents: A Physicist's Life in a Turbulent World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 48.

32. Manfred Gerstenfeld and Tsachi Golan, "Manna as an Environmental Paradigm," in Gerstenfeld, *The Jewish Environmental Tradition, op. cit.,* Appendix.

33. Gerstenfeld, *The Jewish Environmental Tradition, op. cit.*

34. Bavli *Pesahim* 49a. The text continues: "His words remain unheard, he desecrates the names of Heaven, his teacher and his father, and he leaves a bad name behind him for his children and his grandchildren until the end of all generations. How? One calls [his son], as Abayei says, 'son of the furnace heater' or as Rabba says, 'son of the pub dancer' or as R. Papa says, 'son of the plate licker' or as R. Semaia says, 'son of him who sleeps in his clothes' [i.e., from such deep drunkenness]."

35. Yonah Frenkel, *Midrash and Agada* (Tel Aviv: Open University, 1996), vol. 3, p. 607ff (Hebrew).

36. Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.,* p. 207ff.

37. Bahya ben Joseph ibn Paquda was born around 1040, lived in Spain, and died in 1100. *Hovot ha-Levavot* (Jerusalem: Yehuda Yunowitz, 1928), p. 32.

38. Eliot R. Wolfson, "Mirror of Nature in Medieval Jewish Mysticism," background paper, Conference on Judaism and the Natural World, 22-24 February 1998, Harvard University, Center for the Study of World Religions, p. 10.

39. R. David Nieto was born in Venice in 1654, and died in 1728.

40. Haham Zevi (R. Zevi Ashkenazi) was born in Moravia in 1660, served as rabbi in Altona

inter alia, and died in Lemberg in 1718.

41. *Teshuvot* Haham Zevi 18.

42. For further detail, see Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.,* p. 24f.

43. R. Avraham Kook was born in Griva, Latvia in 1865, and died in 1935.

44. Zvi Yaron, *Mishnato shel HaRav Kook* (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1974), p. 116 (Hebrew).

45. *Ibid.,* p. 117 (Hebrew).

46. Benjamin Ish-Shalom, "The Concept of Nature in the Thought of Rav Kook," background paper, Conference on Judaism and the Natural World, 22-24 February 1998, Harvard University, Center for the Study of World Religions, p. 4.

47. Nahum Rakover, "*Yachaso shel haAdam laSeviva beMishnat haRav Kook,*" in Simha Raz, ed., *Kobez haZionut haDatit* (Jerusalem: Histadrut HaMizrahi, 1997), pp. 30-37 (Hebrew).

48. Edward K. Kaplan, "Reverence and Responsibility: Abraham Joshua Heschel on Nature and the Self," background paper, Conference on Judaism and the Natural World, 22-24 February 1998, Harvard University, Center for the Study of World Religions, p. 12.

49. *Ibid.,* p. 16.

50. He added: "For large periods of their history, Jews were urban creatures. People who live in cities are by the nature of things not always at home in the world of nature. Thus there arose a kind of cultural alienation from the natural world which in the mind of some came to be perceived not as a relatively recent, socially-conditioned sensibility true of many -- but by no means all -- urban Jews, but as something deeper and more valuational or ideational. It is to this probably unconscious and uncritical transition from sociology to theology which I object." Moshe Sokol, "What are the Ethical Implications of Jewish Theological Conceptions of the Natural World?," background paper, Conference on Judaism and the Natural World, 22-24 February 1998, Harvard University, Center for the Study of World Religions, p. 4.

51. Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.,* p. 189f.

52. Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed,* part 3, section 13.

53. Sokol, *op. cit.,* p. 9.

54. Joshua Schwartz, "Dogs and Cats in Jewish Society in the Second Temple, Mishnah and Talmud Periods," lecture given at the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, July-August 1997.

55. Gerstenfeld, *The Jewish Environmental Tradition, op. cit.*

56. Responsa *Seridei Esh* 3:7 (Hebrew).

57. Responsa *Ziz Eliezer* 14:68 (Hebrew).

58. Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Environmental Issues in Contemporary Halakha," *JCT Perspective* (2000), pp. 10-11.

59. *Sefer HaHinnukh,* commandment 529. This work was written by R. Aaron Halevi from Barcelona around 1300 (Jerusalem: Eshkol, 1946) (Hebrew).

60. Shubert Spero, *Morality, Halacha and the Jewish Tradition* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1983).

61. Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.,* p. 136f.

62. Ecclesiastes *Rabba* 7:13 (Vilna edition).

63. Mishna *Bava Batra* 2:3 (Hebrew).

64. Bavli *Bava Metsia* 118b.

65. Bavli *Shabbat* 67b.

66. Nahum Rakover, *Eikhut HaSviva* (Jerusalem: Sifriat HaMishpat HaIvri, 1993), Appendix A, pp. 111ff (Hebrew).

67. Norman Lamm, "A Jewish View of the Environment and Ecology," lecture given at the Technion, Haifa, 7 October 1996.

68. Manfred Gerstenfeld and Avraham Wyler, "The Ultra-Orthodox Community and Environmental Issues," *Jerusalem Letter,* no. 415, 1 October 1999.

69. Avner de-Shalit, "From the Political to the Objective: The Dialectics of Zionism and the Environment," *Environmental Politics,* vol. 4, no. 1 (Spring, 1995); and Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Zionism and the Environment," *Kivunim Hadashim* 4, forthcoming (Hebrew).

70. Manfred Gerstenfeld, "The Kibbutz and the Environment," *Nihul* (December 2000) (Hebrew).

71. Ish-Shalom, *op. cit.*

72. Einat Ramon, "The Torah of Nature: A.D. Gordon's Ecological Theology and Zionism," lecture given at the Seventh International Conference of the Israel Society for Ecology and Environmental Quality Sciences on Environmental Challenges for the Next Millennium, Jerusalem, 13-18 June 1999.

73. Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat* (Berlin: Juedischer Verlag, 1936), p. 31 (German).

74. Cohen continues: "He decided that he would obey the new commandments which he invented in the name of God whom he also invented. Sublime commandments which, by his own volition, would transform him into Man, toward which marvelous and desperate venture this anthropoid launched himself....This truth, I can never repeat it enough: my beloved, royal and beautiful truth. I swear it, to whoever sees it and wants to see it." Albert Cohen, *Carnets* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), p. 132 (French).

75. Bernard Malamud, *God's Grace* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995). See also Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.,* p. 37.

76. Meir Shalev, *Roman Russi* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1989) (Hebrew). See also Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.,* p. 37.

77. Aubrey Rose, ed., *Judaism and Ecology* (London: Cassell, 1992), pp. 114-115; and Ellen Bernstein, ed., *Ecology and the Jewish Spirit: Where Nature and the Sacred Meet* (Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998).

78. The first specific mention of the environment as an issue of concern for the Jewish community in a joint program plan of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council was in 1991-92 (p. 45). Energy had already been included in the Council's program plans since the end of the 1970s. This organization has since changed its name to the "Jewish Council for Public Affairs," and in its agenda for public affairs for 1998-99, environmental concerns cover nine pages out of fifty-nine.

79. Daniel J. Elazar, "Strengthening the Ties Between the American Jewish Community and the States," *Jerusalem Letter,* no. 364, 15 August 1997.

80. Nigel Savage, "Looking Beyond Communal Rhythms," *Sh'ma,* September 2000, p. 15.

81. Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Neo-Paganism in the Public Square and Its Relevance to Judaism," *Jewish Political Studies Review,* vol. 11, nos. 3-4 (Fall 1999):11-38.

82. Bassett, *op. cit.,* p. 43.

83. Lamm, *op. cit.*

84. Further on, he wrote: "In the biotic community, a parallel situation exists. Abraham knew exactly what the land was for: it was to drip milk and honey into Abraham's mouth. At the present moment, the assurance with which we regard this assumption is inverse to the degree of our education." Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. viii, 204.

85. Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science,* 155 (10 March 1967):1203-37.

86. *Ibid.*

87. For instance, ten years after White, biologist Jean-Marie Pelt states in his prize-winning book: "Judeo-Christianity marks, through its historic evolution, a break with nature: not feeling any obligations besides those toward God and his brothers, man undertook to liberate himself of natural constraints; but, he also found in this effort, consciously or not, an alibi for his inclination toward domination." Jean-Marie Pelt, *L'homme re-nature* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977), p. 257 (French). Pelt's book received the European Ecology Prize. For a more detailed discussion of the "spoliation of nature" debate, see Gerstenfeld, *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment, op. cit.,* p. 56ff.

88. See Gerstenfeld, "Neo-Paganism in the Public Square," *op. cit.*

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Manfred Gerstenfeld is Chairman of the Steering Committee of Fellows of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, co-publisher of the *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints* and *Jewish Environmental Perspectives,* and an international consultant specializing in business and environmental strategy to the senior ranks of multinational corporations. His books include *Environment and Confusion* (1994), *Israel's New Future: Interviews* (1994), and *Judaism, Environmentalism and the Environment* (1998). His newest book, *The Jewish Environmental Tradition: A Sustainable World,* will be published later this year in Hebrew.

Dore Gold and Manfred Gerstenfeld, Co-Publishers; Mark Ami-El, Managing Editor. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (Registered Amuta), 13 Tel-Hai St., Jerusalem, Israel; Tel. 972-2-5619281, Fax. 972-2-5619112, Email: jcpa@netvision.net.il. In U.S.A.: Center for Jewish Community Studies, 1515 Locust St., Suite 703, Philadelphia, PA 19102-3726; Tel. (215) 772-0564, Fax. (215) 772-0566. Website: www.jcpa.org. © Copyright.

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