38/651
June 2008/Sivan 5768
A publication of
Jewish Family & Life!
J F L m e d i a . c o m

Sh'ma שמע

Inside the Environment

Lawrence Troster
Beyond Personal Virtue . . 1

Nigel Savage
Insignificance & Responsibility 2

Max Singer
Needed: Balanced Environmentalists 4

Mark Barnett
Taking Action 5

Roger S. Gottlieb
Change & Transformation . 6

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson
Environmentalism & Gender 7

Julian Sinclair
Halakhah & Climate Change 8

Discussion Guide 9

NiSh'ma 10

Yosef Israel Abramowitz
A Renewable Light Unto the Nations 12

Eilon Schwartz
A Sustainable Future 13

Natalie Weiss
Going Green in the Jewish School 14

Les Klein
Building Green 15

Andrea Cohen-Kiener & Lowell "Rusty" Pritchard
Sharing the Earth 16

Haim Watzman
Birds & Life 18

Susan Berrin
A Moving Target 19

Andrew Silow-Carroll
Sh'ma Ethics 20

Bulk copies of this issue are available. Contact lharris@jflmedia.com $2/copy for 10–50 copies $1/copy for 51 or more copies.

To subscribe:
877-568-SHMA
www. shma. com

Suddenly environmentalists are no longer the stodgy, humorless, and dull clarions of doom. Now, grim predictions of global disaster are commonplace, part of the standard baggage carried around by nearly everyone. What does this mean in terms of changes, short- and long-term? How might Jews — and Judaism — take on this new, urgent reality? What does it mean in terms of faith and behavior — on both the personal and communal levels? How can Judaism confront fully our teachings about stewardship and covenant, and dominion — our oldest, most formative impulses? How we change indelibly our relationship with the planet while building on our religious and communal foundations is the question — terrifying and unavoidable — at the center of this issue of *Sh'ma*. —S.B.

Beyond Personal Virtue

Lawrence Troster

In April of 2001 Vice President Dick Cheney was quoted in an interview asserting that "Conservation may be a sign of personal virtue, but it is not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy." He was roundly excoriated by the environmental community for this view. Seven years later, in the midst of skyrocketing energy prices, increasing climate change, and global food shortages, most people in the U.S. continue to live as if the environmental crisis can be dealt with through acts of personal virtue confined to consumer choices.

It is time for Jewish environmentalism to move beyond an apologetic theology and an ethic of personal virtue.

On this issue most American Jews are no different from other Americans. We belong to the highest-consuming nation in the world, the least energy efficient, the largest producer of greenhouse gases; we are part of our society that consumes the most, and yet we act as if changing a light bulb, using our reusable bags from Whole Foods, planting trees in Israel as carbon offsets, and buying more organic food will solve the climate change crisis.

While many Jewish organizations have policy statements that call for significant environmental action, those same organizations up until now have failed to implement these policies. Over the past 18 months, the interfaith environmental organization GreenFaith has been touring the film *An Inconvenient Truth*. Following the viewing and discussion, the group gives out pledge cards with five, increasingly difficult actions — from changing light bulbs to buying a low-mileage car or hybrid. Though this and other groups are helping people see how to do things to make a difference, it is not enough.

Jewish environmentalists are stuck — for the most part — in an apologetic approach, which posits that religious traditions as such supply all the needed theological resources to address the environmental crisis. Although the first Jewish theological response to the crisis was written 40 years ago, yet the same biblical and rabbinic texts continue to be cited and discussed in our writing.

This lack of new theology reinforces the idea that environmental actions can remain a personal virtue. By emphasizing *tikkun olam*, Jewish environmentalism has not moved beyond a stewardship ethic that privileges human needs. And we have not seriously embraced the ethic

of environmental justice that connects the degradation of the environment to racism and economic inequities. Jewish theologians and ethicists for the most part have not been part of the significant critique of modern capitalism and globalization that has been coming from process theology, liberation theology, and ecofeminism.

It is time for Jewish environmentalism to move beyond an apologetic theology and an ethic of personal virtue to become more engaged with the many creative ideas that have been emanating from religious and environmental movements. New Creation theology, which emphasizes the interconnection of all people and all life, must become the foundation of a far bolder Jewish ethical response. As the environmental crisis grows more serious, we must help people understand how our lifestyles affect the lives of millions of other people in this country and around the world, how our lives contribute to the extinction of thousands of species every year, and how we are literally consuming the earth.

British writer George Monbiot claims we must set a goal of 90 percent reduction; this will not be achieved by only changing light bulbs. Monbiot puts forward a moral choice: continue to live the way we do and have millions of people die in Ethiopia (from drought) and Bangladesh (from rising seas) or radically change.

Do we continue to resist or deny that choice because we project, as Monbiot points out, "the future as repeated instances of the present"? We all believe that we will not be affected; we will find a way to survive or that somehow something will save us. If we all change a light bulb, the Messiah will come. The *midrash* that Jewish environmentalists love to quote has God saying, "See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it." It is time to heed that call.

Rabbi Lawrence Troster is director of the fellowship program and rabbinic scholar-in-residence for GreenFaith, the interfaith environmental coalition in New Jersey. He also co-chairs the Interfaith Partnership for the Environment of UNEP (United Nations Environment Program).

Insignificance and Responsibility:
Rethinking Jewish Environmentalism

Nigel Savage

We are powerless to prevent the global scorching that will ensue in the next 20 years: it is a consequence of carbon already in the atmosphere. We are powerless to prevent the extinction of species that have already passed the point of no return. Great swathes of the world have been devastated by pollution and over-industrialization. The world's oil represents, as Thom Hartmann once put it, "a billion years of ancient sunlight," and we will use up those resources within another generation or two.

Against these harsh facts we can merely acknowledge that what is done is done. And those of us who believe that the Jewish people can or could or should make a difference must reckon with a further level of insignificance. We, who were one percent of the world's people a century ago, are today barely two-tenths of a percent of the world's population. If every Jew in the world traded an SUV for a Prius and never boarded an airplane again, it would not halt, much less reverse, global scorching. Putting a solar-powered *ner tamid* in a synagogue is by itself a pinprick upon our planet. It is inconsequential, and we owe it to our own intellectual integrity to acknowledge this fact.

Why then do we do anything? Why is there a Jewish environmental movement? Why are Jewish institutions starting to green themselves? And in a professionalized community that respects evaluation, outcomes, and metrics, what are our ultimate goals?

We must begin by acknowledging that a considerable part of our present behavioral shift is rooted in embarrassment. We're realizing that placing a plastic bottle into the world's oceans for a century or more is a ludicrous price to pay for the five minutes it takes us to drink the bottle's contents. We have grown up with behaviors that are morally indefensible. They are entrenched by custom, but they wither in the face of clear thought. So we are slowly becoming embarrassed by our own behavior, and we are effecting change as self-realization dawns. This is not a bad reason to change one's behavior — I think it's probably quite a good one — but it's important to acknowledge what's happening because we rarely seem to own up to this sort of thing.

After embarrassment, the next step is the desire to feel we're doing something useful. Just as smoking became socially unacceptable, so now our institutions use recycled paper, we print on both sides, we reduce our disposables or switch to ones that are compostable. Yet if

Nigel Savage founded Hazon (www.hazon.org) in 2000. Hazon, now the largest environmental organization in the American Jewish community, works to create a healthier and more sustainable Jewish community, as a step toward a healthier and more sustainable world for all.

we add up the aggregate impact of all these activities they turn out to be fairly marginal. Even if adopted not just by every Jew but by everyone alive today, those activities wouldn't halt our deeply dangerous experiment in climate change from spiraling out of control.

This is why we need larger and clearer goals. We need to integrate education, action, and advocacy. And it's why we need a clearer strategy for what we're trying to do. If we are serious about being *or l'goyim* (a light unto the nations), our goal must be a healthy and sustainable world for all its inhabitants. It means acting to slow the damage and then steadily working to ameliorate it.

The role of education, and the work of nonprofits and faith communities, is to touch people's lives so that we act differently as citizens and consumers. But education is only the first step: action and advocacy are vital. When a government introduces a $50 fee to drive an SUV into Central London — a fee that will take effect later this year — they do so when a sufficient critical mass of public support endorses such a decision. When Wal-Mart or any other major business goes "green" in serious ways, they do so because they believe that competitive advantages will ensue, that a growing number of consumers want carbon-labeled products so that they can monitor and reduce their individual carbon output.

This is how Jewish education relates to broad issues. We need to steadily change what and how we consume, to connect this to Jewish tradition, and to place this within a larger series of goals. That's why we ought to set the goal of reducing our carbon output by 80 percent, as a people, by 2030. That's why we must lead the change effort in the U.S. and must support the work of environmental organizations in Israel. We must green our institutions and integrate this process with serious Jewish learning. We should address in particular food systems, transportation, and climate change: these three areas connect personal behavior, Jewish tradition, and the largest issues we face today.

Although irreversible damage has been done, changes we begin today will do good in the long run. Being Jewish is about having a time horizon that transcends the lifetime of an individual. Jews settled Palestine a century ago so that a State of Israel that they would never know might come to fruition. Honi Hama-agel famously planted a carob tree so that his heirs might enjoy its fruit. The seeds of a strategy for serious environmental change are the seeds we need to plant today.

Three key things we should be doing

- All Jewish organizations should create a health and sustainability commission. The goals should be to green the institution, to reduce our carbon footprints by 80 percent in the next 20 years, and to integrate this process with the organization's broader mission.
- We need to build a much stronger Jewish environmental movement, with a strategy for grassroots organizing, a clear framework for coordinating advocacy work nationally, and stronger relationships with the Israeli environmental movement and other faith-based environmental movements in the U.S.
- "Learning leads to doing." This is a key Jewish understanding. We need to learn where our food comes from, where our waste goes, and how Jewish tradition connects to key contemporary issues. The more serious the learning, the more profound will be the impact.

Sh'ma שמע

Editor-in-Chief and Executive Director: Susan Berrin

Executive Editor: Yosef I. Abramowitz

Founding Editor: Rabbi Eugene Borowitz

Art Director: Jill A. Winitzer

Webmasters: Hyung Park and Sharon Sbarsky

Chair, Jewish Family & Life! Board: Evan Schlessinger

CEO, Jewish Family & Life!: Amir Cohen

Sh'ma Advisory Committee: Aryeh Cohen, Brigitte Dayan, Charlotte Fonrobert, Neil Gillman, Lisa Grant, Richard Hirsh, Julian Levinson, Shaul Magid, Josh Rolnick, Or Rose, Carol Brennglass Spinner, David Teutsch, Devorah Zlochower

Contributing Editors: Michael Berenbaum, Elliot Dorff, Arnie Eisen, Leonard Fein, Barry Freundel, Rela M. Geffen, Neil Gillman, Irving Greenberg, Joanne Greenberg, Brad Hirschfield, Paula Hyman, Lori Lefkovitz, Richard Marker, Deborah Dash Moore, Vanessa Ochs, Kerry Olitzky, Riv-Ellen Prell, Harold Schulweis, Elie Wiesel, Arnold Jacob Wolf, David Wolpe, Michael Wyschogrod

The opinions expressed in *Sh'ma* do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.

Sh'ma Partners: Hebrew College Rabbinical School, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, The Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program, Indiana University, Frankel Center for Jewish Studies, University of Michigan, Taube Center for Jewish Studies, Stanford University, The Lippman Kanfer Family Foundation, Carol Brennglass Spinner, Bruce Whizin, Marilyn Ziering

Donations to *Sh'ma* are tax deductible. *Sh'ma* is available in microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Mich. , and in audio format from the Jewish Braille Institute.

Address all editorial correspondence to *Sh'ma*, P. O. Box 9129, Newton, MA 02464. Telephone: 617. 581. 6810.

Email: sberrin@JFLmedia. com.

Send all subscription queries and address changes to *Sh'ma*, P. O. Box 439, Congers, NY 10920-0439.

Telephone: 877. 568. SHMA.

Email: shma@cambeywest. com.

Sh'ma is published by Jewish Family & Life! monthly except July and August. Application to mail at periodical-class postage rates pending at Newton, MA 02464. Subscriptions: $49/2 years in U. S. ; $29/1 year; $59/2 years international; $39/1 year international; $21. 97 for one year senior/student. Bulk subscriptions are available at reduced prices. Please notify the subscription office in writing if you prefer that your name not be given out on rented lists.
Copyright ©2008 Jewish Family & Life!

ISSN: 0049-0385 June 2008.

WITH ALL SPONSORSHIPS, *SH'MA* RESERVES COMPLETE EDITORIAL CONTROL OF CONTENT.

Needed: Passionately Balanced Environmentalists

Max Singer

Nigel Savage believes passionately that Jews have a Jewish duty to help protect the environment. I agree. But I believe that Savage neglects an essential component of that duty: to be well-informed about the controversial questions of how to protect the environment.

First, we must understand that more protection is not always better. Going too far in eliminating "pollutants" can be not only wasteful but dangerous. Perhaps the most dramatic case has been the excessive opposition to DDT, which used in small doses indoors doesn't hurt anything except mosquitoes. Prohibitions against the use of DDT have caused literally millions of people to die from malaria.

In most cases the essence of environmental policy decisions is not recognizing evil but striving to reach the best balance between conflicting considerations. There are at least three mistakes that sometimes lead to excessive environmentalism.

First, is to be mesmerized by our increasing ability to detect vanishingly small amounts of chemicals and radiation, even though one of the basic principles of pharmacology is that "the dose makes the poison." Arsenic, for example, is a deadly poison, but it is also essential to human life.

Second, there is an impulse to say that costs should not stand in the way of further reductions in pollutants because life is more important than money. But wasting money is, in effect, wasting the lives of those who worked to produce the value behind that money. When a billion dollars is wasted on unnecessary regulation, it is throwing away the life work of some 500 people — or the benefit that could be gained by spending that money usefully.

Third, excessive efforts to reduce pollutants slow the economic growth and scientific advancement that will enable us to address new hazards. For example, if it were not for the scientific advances of the postwar years, AIDS would have been much more devastating when it burst out of Africa.

Environmental disputes are often described as a conflict between business's desire to make more money and the government or green NGOs' concern to protect people and the earth. This is a double mistake. First, the increased costs of environmental rules do not reduce business' profits; they increase consumers' costs. In fact *stricter* rules are sometimes in business's selfish interest because they can inhibit competition.

The second reason why it is a mistake for Jewish idealists to prefer the arguments of nonprofit green groups, is that the motivations of government and green NGOs are not necessarily less selfish than those who argue against more stringent rules. Government agencies have political and ideological interests that are at least as capable of motivating diversions from truth and objectivity as are the financial interests of businesses. The jobs of some 50,000 people depend on green organizations being able to raise money through direct mail.

Environmental progress is not measured by whether regulations are becoming more stringent but by whether pollution is declining. Current regulations will continue to reduce pollution, for example as they apply to an increased share of the car fleet.

Most of Savage's passion is devoted to a strong position on human-caused global warming. Two things are clear. First, human activity has some effect on climate. Second, there has been global warming since 1900. Specifically, average temperatures increased from 1900–1940, decreased from 1940–1973, increased from 1973–1998, and have been level or declining since 1998. But there is much less scientific agreement than usually claimed about whether current trends of increased carbon in the atmosphere will cause enough warming to justify very expensive prevention efforts.

Already, anti-warming ethanol subsidies have increased worldwide basic food costs by half in order to produce trivial anti-warming benefits. One prominent believer in human-caused global warming, Danish writer Bjorn Lomberg, led a major study indicating that reducing carbon use now will do only a fraction of the good for people and for the environment as would other ways of spending the money. (Lomberg also notes that the reduction of heat deaths from preventing global warming is about 10 percent of the reduction in cold deaths that would result from the warming.)

As Jews, when we aspire to lead the world toward protecting the environment, we must take care to get our facts straight, to channel our passion, and to be ready when necessary to challenge the lead of those in the green business.

Max Singer is a founder and Senior Fellow of the Hudson Institute. His book Passage to a Human World *includes extensive discussion of the risks of environmental contamination.*

Taking Meaningful Action

Mark Barnett

Human-induced climate change is real, and on a trajectory to get worse. The current atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide, approximately 385 parts per million (ppm), *already* exceeds the level that NASA's James Hansen believes likely to cause catastrophic climate change. This is important news, since for years scientists and policymakers had called for stabilizing carbon dioxide concentrations somewhat arbitrarily at 550 ppm, or roughly double pre-industrial levels. More recently, as melting glaciers and extreme weather events have become more prevalent, the European Union and other organizations began advocating a reduced stabilization target of 450 ppm. But now Hansen, believing that even a 450 ppm target greatly underestimates the dangers, has declared that the goal must be 350 ppm to avoid truly cataclysmic climate change.

Whatever the target, immediate global collective action is required to make current energy use dramatically more efficient, to develop and deploy low-carbon and no-carbon energy technologies, and to change land use patterns and halt deforestation. In short, to avoid catastrophe, we need to mount the single greatest collective effort in human history.

The U.S., which rejected the Kyoto Protocol in 2001, has unfortunately thus far resisted taking meaningful action on the issue. Our nation must immediately become a global leader on climate change. The Bush Administration and other Kyoto critics point to the lack of binding targets on the developing world, particularly China and India. While it is true that the developing world has not yet committed to any emissions caps, it is also true that the U.S. cannot provide moral leadership while resisting domestic action, especially since over 25 percent of the excess carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere is red, white, and blue.

The U.S. must begin making itself part of the solution by implementing a cap-and-trade regime — i.e., an economy-wide cap on greenhouse gas emissions coupled with the ability to trade the right to emit. The Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act, slated for consideration on the floor of the Senate in June, would enact such a system but the emissions reduction targets it sets are not ambitious enough in light of the severity of the climate crisis. Dr. Hansen and others agree that the U.S. must reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 80 percent by 2050, whereas Lieberman-Warner would only achieve emissions reductions of approximately 65 percent. Nonetheless, the bill would be a tremendous step in the right direction.

In parallel with capping emissions, the U.S. must begin subsidizing new clean energy technology development and energy efficiency measures on a drastically increased scale. Think Apollo program, only bigger. Today's technologies can take us a long way, but we simply cannot achieve the required emissions reductions without an unprecedented commitment to the development and deployment of new technologies. Allowances under a cap-and-trade system should be auctioned (not given away) to generate billions of dollars for the subsidization of efficiency measures, the deployment of clean energy, and the development of new technology. These subsidies will accelerate the innovation of the U.S. clean energy sector, likely triggering an economic boom, and allowing us to begin a massive technology transfer effort to the fast-growing economies of the developing world.

One inspiring vision for how the U.S. could dramatically shift its carbon emissions profile can be found in the December 2007 *Scientific American* article detailing how large scale solar energy farms, coupled with underground compressed air storage, deployed primarily in the American Southwest, could provide 69 percent of U.S. electricity requirements (and 35 percent of its total energy requirements, including transportation) by 2050. With wind, biomass, and geothermal energy in the mix, the researchers featured in the *Scientific American* article suggest that U.S. electricity requirements could be 100 percent renewable energy-based by 2100 (90 percent of total energy requirements). But this vision will only come to be with a significant, long-term commitment from the federal government.

Many, here and abroad, will claim that these policies will cost too much and cannot be justified. The costs of doing nothing, however, are simply far greater. As Sir Nicholas Stern, the Head of Britain's Government Economic Service wrote in his well-publicized 2007 report: "The costs of stabilizing the

Sh'ma does not publish in July & August. We'll be back in September with a special High Holiday issue.

Mark Barnett is co-chair of the Energy Technology & Renewables practice at Foley Hoag LLP, a leading Boston law firm, and is active in a number of regional initiatives focused on the development of the clean energy sector.

climate are significant but manageable; delay would be dangerous and much more costly."

Individual Americans bear significant responsibility in this monumental challenge, but a radical shift toward a lower-carbon economy cannot occur without governmental action. We each need to do what we can to reduce our personal carbon footprint, but we also must demand that our leaders adopt the bold policies necessary to shift our economy and spark the private sector before it is too late.

Change & Transformation

Roger S. Gottlieb

What difference does it make that we're Jewish? As the glaciers melt, storms increase in power, the weird weather freaks us out, species go extinct, and hundreds of threatening changes — from tropical diseases moving north to drought crippled agriculture — darken our future, maybe it is just our sheer physicality that matters. Perhaps global climate change is such an overwhelmingly chemical and biological event that all this stuff about God, history, culture, and moral values dwindles into insignificance. To the extent that this is true, it is instructive that in some cases the business of being Jewish, about which we make such a fuss, is really not important at all.

We freely engage in environmental processes that are already having lethal effects on countries that benefited much less from breakneck "development" and will suffer much more from its consequences.

On the other hand, the full catastrophe is clearly not yet upon us. Despite everything that has happened already, we still have time to evaluate, plan, and, if nothing else, take steps to shape how we will respond to the disasters and what the distribution of pain will look like. We may yet be able to mitigate the degree of the calamity, though (admittedly) our chances of doing so in a significant way are speedily diminishing.

And in this process, to the extent that it shapes our moral character and our social ties, our Jewishness is essential.

So what are Jews to make of global warming? And in particular, what are we to make of the fact that as citizens of highly industrialized countries we freely engage in environmental processes that are already having lethal effects on countries that benefited much less from breakneck "development" and will suffer much more from its consequences?

Just to face the specter of global warming, we will have to overcome our avoidance and denial, our false confidence in technology and bureaucracy, our blind assurance that "it can't happen." Our own darkest hour and history's greatest preparation for the perils of modernity, the Holocaust, reminds us that "the unimaginable" can lurk right around the corner. Besides being an exercise in insane ethnic hatred and self-delusion, the Holocaust was also a carefully planned bureaucratic and engineered *program*. What might we apply, then, from our history lessons to the devastations of climate change, the poisoning of air, water, earth, and our own bloodstreams?

Our participation in the creation of climate change poses a profound challenge to our collective self-image. We have described ourselves as a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," and prayed that the peoples of the earth would acknowledge our God and (by implication) learn God's will from us. We have (justly) celebrated our vastly disproportionate contributions to world culture, and publicly proclaimed our victimization by the world to which we have given so much.

Yet in the face of global warming, it turns out, we are not really different than any of the '*goyim*.' We too want our big cars, our endlessly expanding economy, our energy-wasting appliances, our jet travel to Israel and Miami. No matter how singular our religious services, cultural style, or average level of advanced degrees may be, we have been and continue to be as shortsighted and selfish as everyone else. While there are Jewish environmentalists and Jewish environmental organizations, they do not represent a collective accomplishment that sets us apart from any other religious group. In terms of our collective environmental practice we are (in a phrase guaranteed to horrify most Jewish parents if applied to their children) about average.

There are many lessons to be drawn from all this. Here is one. As Jews, it is now our task to rethink, and act anew, our rela-

Roger S. Gottlieb, a professor of philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, is a contributing editor to Tikkun Magazine*, and on the Leadership Council of Religious Witness for the Earth. Two of his recent books are* A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future *and* Joining Hands: Politics and Religion Together for Social Change.

tions with the several billion non-Jews, as well as countless non-humans, with which we share this planet. Our task now is solidarity. Not to be a moral example as the group who knows better because God gave us a message hidden from everyone else. Not to be victims in need of special aid. Not even to be a separate but equal community that will take care of itself as other communities take care of themselves. Though our resources are distinct, our focus should not be on that distinctness but on our similarity and on the depth of our connections. Just like everyone else, we have sinned and need to change our ways. Just like everyone else we share the earth as our only home and depend on other humans to face this threat. Just like everyone else we are scared of the future, scared to change, and scared to look at the truth. Just like everyone else our present responsibility is to face our own stubbornness and despair, to prove that we are truly made in God's image, and that we — when faced with this desperate choice between business-as-usual and living up to the truth — can indeed choose life.

Environmentalism & Gender

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson

For nearly four decades, a small group of Jewish activists, academics, theologians, rabbis, and educators has engaged Judaism from an environmental perspective, giving rise to a nascent Jewish environmentalism. Today there is a growing literature that analyzes conceptions of nature in the sources of Judaism, as well as a body of "environmental halakhah," namely directives that instruct and inspire Jews how to act individually and collectively in regard to the natural world and what stance to take in the debates about the current ecological crisis (see coejl.org).

Like other contemporary movements, environmentalism has been both impacted by feminism and deemed susceptible to gender analysis. Coined in 1974, the term "ecofeminism" captures the feminist engagement with environmentalism, stating that the ideology that authorizes oppression based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and physical abilities is the same ideology that sanctions the oppression of nature. Ecofeminism, both as a philosophical stance and a social movement, reminds environmentalists that the oppression of the natural world by humans is deeply connected to the oppression of women by men in a patriarchal society. Therefore, any adequate environmental ethics that addresses the oppression and exploitation of nature must be imbued with feminist sensibilities. To address the realities and specificities of women's oppression, ecofeminists demand that attention be paid to how the oppression relies on and fuels the devaluation and exploitation of nonhuman "natural" beings and entities. While many ecofeminists describe their work as an "expansive feminism," they also challenge ecological and environmental approaches that do not look at gender, race, class, or the connections among destructive ideologies and practices.

By investigating the ways in which negative constructions of femininity and hence of women's subordinate roles, identities, and material circumstances were interwoven with the devaluation of nature, the historical work of ecofeminists set the stage for philosophical inquiry, and also suggested connections between male-dominated science, technology, and the destruction of the natural world, and the oppression of women.

The relationship between ecofeminism and Judaism is not simple: On the one hand, as a patriarchal religion, Judaism is susceptible to the critique of ecofeminism, as it is to other forms of feminist critique. But on the other hand, as a critique of Western (Christian) thought, Judaism is compatible with some variants of ecofeminism, albeit not all. The canonic sources of Judaism could be interpreted to mean that God has given humans the command to rule over other creatures. Such interpretation, which environmentalists rightly critique, is the source of much of our ecological crisis, but it also has a gender dimension because "nature" has been equated with "female," especially in medieval Jewish philosophical sources. Nature is that which humans (i.e., men) must transcend through study, performance of the commandments, and the pursuit of intellectual perfection. Ecofeminists note that the association of women and nature has justified the mistreatment of both women and nature and requires amelioration.

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson is professor of history, director of Jewish Studies, and Irving and Miriam Lowe Chair of Modern Judaism at Arizona State University in Tempe, Ariz. Born in Kibbutz Afikim, Israel, she received her PhD in Jewish philosophy and mysticism from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1978. She is the author of Happiness in Premodern Judaism: Virtue Knowledge and Wellbeing *and editor of* Women and Gender in Jewish Philosophy *as well as* Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed World.

Read Arthur Green on "Creation Theology" from the *Sh'ma* archive: shma.com

However, some variants within ecofeminism are more compatible with Judaism than others. For example, Judaism is compatible with feminist Social Ecology as formulated by Karen J. Warren. In fact, the very characteristics that make this variant of Social Ecology feminist are the same characteristics that postmodern Jewish ethicists insist are what distinguishes Jewish ethics from its Western, Christian counterpart. Feminist ecological theory is not value-neutral, nor based on abstract individualism. It is contextual, pluralistic, inclusive, rooted in lived experience, relational, and focused on care and love — and these are values that postmodern Jewish philosophers promote. This is no coincidence since Warren's ecofeminist philosophy reflects a shared postmodern sensibility shaped to a great extent by Jewish philosophers Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, who offered important critique and correction to modern Western (Christian) philosophy. That does not mean that ecofeminist philosophy is Jewish or that Jewish philosophy is feminist but that a fruitful dialogue between these discourses can and should ensue. But Buber, whose dialogical philosophy deeply influenced ecological discourse, was no feminist; and Levinas, who used the category of the "feminine" extensively in his philosophy, had no interest in ecology.

By contrast, Judaism is incompatible with an ecofeminism that takes its inspiration from Deep Ecology, a strand within environmental thought that focuses on biotic rights and rejects anthropocentrism. This movement stands in conflict with the Jewish belief in obligations that God revealed to humans and to them alone. The movement's rejection of anthropocentrism undermines not only any human attempt to manage diminishing natural resources in accord with the science of ecology, but also makes it impossible to cultivate the very values that are deemed important, such as compassion, loving-kindness, and friendship toward the nonhuman living beings. Concern for others necessitates a prior recognition that the "other" is different from the self. This is precisely what "You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Lev. 19:18) teaches.

A similar critique can be extended toward the nature-based feminist spirituality of New Age spirituality and contemporary neo-Paganism. Earth-based feminist spirituality drives its inspiration from pre-Christian pagan culture: Greek, Sumerian, Celtic, Druid, Egyptian, Norse, or Cannanite — all allegedly peaceful, pro-nature and nonsexist. But a close look at earth-based spirituality shows serious problems in the claims about ancient Goddess religion, the interpretation of the biblical cult of Asherah, the rejection of the theology of createdness, the glorification of nature as a source of moral value, the identification of personhood and embodiment, and the appropriation of feminine symbolism in kabbalah. While nature-based feminist spirituality may seem attractive to Jewish feminists, especially those with environmental sensibility, its claims should not be adopted without serious analysis and critique.

A Jewish critical engagement with environmentalism in general and with ecofeminism in particular, is an example of how Judaism could continue to grow through conversation with cultural movements originating outside of the Jewish fold. Precisely because Judaism touches on all aspects of life, it cannot remain oblivious to either environmentalism or feminism, two of the most profound intellectual currents in the contemporary life, or to their conflation — ecofeminism. As reflecting Jews who seek truth and justice in light of our revealed tradition, we should engage these movements creatively and critically, being transformed by them and hopefully also transforming them.

Halakhah & Climate Change

Julian Sinclair

Rabbi Julian Sinclair is cofounder of Jewish Climate Initiative, JewishClimateInitiative.org and author of The Green God *(forthcoming).*

Is halakhah a useful tool for addressing climate change? If it is, then what might climate-change halakhah look like? Halakah defines and articulates crucial Jewish priorities in a way that influences even Jews who are not halakhically observant; it is the medium through which Jews have traditionally expressed and lived their central norms and values. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" is actualized in *halakhot* about visiting the sick and comforting mourners. *Tzedakah*, establishing righteousness and justice in our community, is precisely codified by Maimonides and the *Shukhan Arukh*. If a majority of American

Jews affirms today that a commitment to "social justice" is the cornerstone of their Jewish identity, then that is arguably because of the indelible imprint that *hilkhot tzedakah* has made on Jewish life over the centuries.

When we turn to the popular commentaries on reducing carbon footprints, we notice they look an awful lot like Jewish law. Open any tabloid newspaper and you will find lists of 10, 20, or 50 detailed ways in which you can modify your daily behavior to help save the planet; walk to the shops rather than drive, take a cloth bag for your groceries, don't buy produce grown more than 50 miles from your home.

The language of halakhah is unusually well-attuned to the challenge of shifting individual behavior that climate change poses. The minute specificity of these recommendations is only matched in my experience by halakhic sources. Climate change policy shares with halakhic Judaism a recognition that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Raising awareness is all very well, but redemption requires precisely defined action.

Where, then, should we look to find halakhic models that can be applied to the problem? One obvious place to start is *ba'al taschit* the prohibition on wanton destruction of property and resources. One could construct a plausible halakhic case for enjoining the turning off of lights, switching to CFL bulbs, and driving a smaller car based on the principle that it is wantonly destructive to use more resources than are necessary to achieve given human purpose. I hope halakhists will begin to do so. However, *ba'al taschit* is already well-known as a cornerstone of Jewish environmental ethics. Let me suggest another model.

Hilkhot Shekhenim explores the diverse ways in which neighbors damage one another through their domestic and economic activities and the redress that is available in each case. This body of law balances the legitimate rights of people to do what they want with and on their own property against the rights of their neighbors not to be seriously damaged or inconvenienced by those activities.

It is a principle of Jewish pollution law that there are certain kinds of damage for which a presumptive right to commit them (*hazakah*) can never be established. Among the damages in this category is pollution caused by smoke. There is some argument among the commentators about whether the smoke needs to be of large quantity and/or of constant duration. Greenhouse gases that cause climate change would appear to meet both criteria.

Of course, these laws were developed to address conflicts between neighbors separated by a garden fence. The rabbis did not imagine our situation in which coal-fired power stations in Michigan may contribute to drought in Mali. Can these sources be extrapolated to damage caused on a global scale and through complex mechanisms of causation by greenhouse gas emissions?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, probably the greatest 20th-century halakhist, takes a major step toward translating the laws of damages between neighbors into an industrial context. About smoking in a large public place he writes: "And even though one person smoking in a large room such as a *beit midrash* would not by himself cause damage, nevertheless, since each smoker knows that many other people are smoking, he knows that *his* smoke is causing damage." *(Igerot Moshe, Hoshen Mishpat, 2:18)*

R. Feinstein here disallows the argument of each individual smoker's relative insignificance in the big picture. Since each smoker *knows* that he is a small part of a larger phenomenon that cumulatively is inflicting serious harm on others, he must take responsibility for *his* role in contributing to that damage.

Although we must assume a quantitative leap in transferring this principle to climate change, it does not require a qualitative one. Once we know beyond reasonable doubt that our actions are part of a mass phenomenon that is causing immense harm, it becomes our moral responsibility to change our actions so that we stop being part of the problem.

Discussion Guide

Bringing together myriad voices and experiences provides Sh'ma *readers with an opportunity in a few very full pages to explore a topic of Jewish interest from a variety of perspectives. To facilitate a fuller discussion of these ideas, we offer the following questions:*

1. Is energy conservation a matter of "personal virtue"? How is what we think, linked to what we do?
2. How does our notion of stewardship inform our environmental practice?
3. Should Israel renounce its nuclear energy program?

Upcoming in *Sh'ma*

Sin & Sacrifice for the Holidays

A Jewish Lens on Trafficking

Just Philanthropy

Work: How it is Who We Are

Gender Education: The Teen Years

Sh'ma

נשמע

NiSh'ma
LET US HEAR

Victor Raphael
and Clayton Spada
Common Ground
24" x 30"
pigmented ink
on paper

Victor Raphael, an artist, curator, and filmmaker, has works in the permanent collections of the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He received his BA from the Jewish Theological Seminary (in education) and the University of Michigan (in art history), and currently works as executive director of Test Prep New York. Her work can be seen at barasapir.com. Orly Aviv, a photographer, is doing an MFA in media studies at University College, London. She earned a dual degree in mathematics and political science from Bar Ilan University.

"Common Ground," a collaboration between Victor Raphael and Clayton Spada, speaks to the common origins and interconnectedness of all living things. The piece comprises a planetary mass with a thin blue atmospheric line set off by deep space. The graphic branch element is a phylogenetic evolutionary tree created by Sir Gavin de Beer (1899–1972). The hands are Albert Einstein's (1879–1955), and provide a unique imprint symbolic of humanity.



Bara Sapir
From Prayer Series, #45
3" x 5"
mixed media

Orly Aviv
Snow Trace



I belong to the strain of "tourist photographers" who travel between various worlds, cultures, and landscapes. I try to use my art to confront questions concerning history and metaphysics, place and transcendence, faith and life or death. I wander through landscapes to capture encounters and affinities between the concrete and the sublime.

Clayton Spada is an artist, writer, and adjunct faculty member with the Cypress College Photography Department, teaching film and digital photography, and multimedia courses. He holds a PhD in biology from Leicester University in England. Spada was also co-founder and editor-in-chief of the art quarterly *NoMoPoMo: A Contemporary Artist's Resource*. Bara Sapir, a visual and performing artist, is art editor for *Zeek: A Jewish Journal of Thought and Culture*. Sapir holds masters degrees from the Skirball Museum and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. His artwork can be viewed at: www.victorraphael.com.

A Renewable Light Unto the Nations

Yosef Israel Abramowitz

The convenient truth about the Jewish people is that when we put our minds and capital to work, we can make miracles happen. There is no more noble cause than saving humanity itself, ensuring that God's covenant not to wipe out the planet with rising waters will be — in some small measure — because of our actions.

Saving the earth itself from global warming, and the billions of people and animals on it, is not just environmentalism. It is global survival. Of the trillions of cosmic opportunities for life to flourish, this third rock from the sun may be the only expression, the only experiment, to grace the universe with the possibility of collective moral choice.

Watching Al Gore's movie with Arab and Jewish students at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, on the kibbutz where I live, put into context this challenge. Are Arabs and Jews going to keep fighting on the deck of the sinking Titanic? Or will a greater vision for humanity transcend immediate conflicts?

As Jews, we must transform ourselves from the misunderstood Light Unto the Nations, as Isaiah beckoned, to a Renewable Light Unto the Nations. Our first fundamental challenge is to ensure that the Jewish state, which is home to seven million people, becomes carbon neutral. Unfortunately, the government's stated goal is for only 10 percent of Israel's energy by 2020 to be generated by renewables, primarily solar. This is unacceptable. The European Union, most of whose member countries have half the sunshine of Israel, has set a goal of 20 percent renewables by 2020.

If Israel sets a goal of 40 percent renewables by 2020, it would capture the imagination of our youth, entrepreneurs, scientists, philanthropists, and financiers. It would cast Israel not only as a responsible nation but also as a shining example of what can be accomplished by coordinated global action.

There is plenty of sunshine and land in the Negev and Arava deserts to power this revolution. We need, though, the political will of world Jewry. Linking UJC and Keren Hayesod allocations to Israel's compliance with at least a 20 percent renewables goal would send a powerful message to Israel's leadership, as well as to the next generation of Jews. Such linkage should be accompanied by a World Jewish Action Plan that offers Jews and Jewish institutions worldwide carbon offset opportunities.

Imagine that each year on Tu B'shvat, Jewish families and institutions calculate their carbon footprint and then invest in efforts in the Jewish state to offset that footprint. For example, planting trees in Israel has long been a global Jewish effort. And although forests breathe in the carbon dioxide, which is a powerful carbon offset activity, the majority of trees planted up until now are pine trees, which throw off acidic needles. After a century, the pine forests essentially poison their own roots and die. Future plantings should emphasize Mediterranean Oak and other trees that will work better with the Israeli ecosystems.

Every synagogue, JCC, school, and institution should figure out its footprint, put solar panels on its own roof — with great new naming opportunities — and also set aside funds to invest in Israeli renewable science centers or companies. Furthermore, Partnership 2000 communities (created between Israeli and world Jewish communities) could adopt mirror strategies. When the solar panels are named in Boston, a similar array can be named in Haifa, Boston's sister city. Jewish buildings worldwide and Israeli homes and buildings should adopt green building codes, for which they can have the privilege of hanging on their doorpost a green mezuzah that certifies to the world that the building complies with best environmental practices.

Israel must renounce nuclear power as an option and challenge others in the region to do the same. The Middle East must become a nuclear-energy-free zone. We live in an age of accurate long-range missiles and of daring terrorism. The planet, and especially the Middle East, does not need any radioactive power targets. Nuclear energy is the power of war; solar energy is the power of peace. By taking the nuclear energy option off Israel's table, Israel can offer her neighbors a regional solar energy solution. When raised with a minister of one of Israel's neighbors, he responded: If you help us make solar energy more economical than nuclear[energy], we will give up our nuclear energy exploration program. For the sake of Israel's immediate security, it is time for global Jewish political muscle to be flexed to pro-

A Few Resources

coejl.org
hazon.org
goodenergy.org.il
greenschool.net
thegreenguide.com
recycle4kids.org
jewishclimateinitiative.org
footprintnetwork.org

Yosef Israel Abramowitz serves as president of Global Sun Partners and the Arava Power Company. He currently lives on Kibbutz Ketura with his wife and five children. Yossi is executive editor of Sh'ma. *He blogs daily at Peoplehood.org and can be reached at Yosef@AravaPower.com.*

mote solar and other renewables throughout Israel and the Middle East.

Israel, as a public face of world Jewry and Jewish values, must not only declare herself a responsible member of the world community when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions but also provide leadership on this front. It is notable that major accomplishments in this field — such as plans for electric cars and Israeli-built solar thermal plants in California — so far have come only from private industry. The truth is that today there is no commercial solar energy in the Jewish state. And the plans for renewables in Israel do not reflect the aspirations or potential of the Jewish people. What would Isaiah say?

A Sustainable Future

Eilon Schwartz

Why should climate change interest Israel? The politics of greenhouse gases, from Kyoto to Bali, moves between the American addiction to fossil fuels on the one hand, and the rapidly growing economies of China and India on the other. Should developing countries continue to choose American-style energy consumption, most climate scientists predict the worst-case scenarios of global warming. When calculating our national carbon emissions, Israel is irrelevant to the international geopolitical debate.

But at its heart, this is a moral issue. Global warming is the most dramatic but certainly not the only warning sign of something having gone terribly wrong in the human relationship with the world. In Israel, most rivers are heavily polluted, water sources are overdrawn, air pollution is responsible for over 1000 deaths in the greater Tel Aviv area alone, the Dead Sea is disappearing at a rate of one meter per year, beachfront is disappearing behind luxury apartments and exclusive beaches, and the land is being swallowed up underneath suburban sprawl. Israel has first-world consumer patterns, with third-world population growth. It's a tiny country, mostly desert; there is little room for mistakes, and we have already made many. Israel's ecological footprint — how much land is needed to support its current population and lifestyle, and to dispose of its waste — is far greater than its current size (see footprintnetwork.org).

Some see this as counterintuitive. Zionism, after all, was about the return of the Jewish people to stewardship over the Land. The Diaspora was the place where Jewish culture and nature were separated from one another. Zionism was not only a political movement but also a cultural claim that we needed to reconnect our cultural lives with the natural world. Both the secular A. D. Gordon and the religious HaRav Kook understood how Zionism revolutionized the relationship of Jewish life with nature.

But Zionism, then and now, was always a movement with inner contradictions. The romanticism of Gordon and Kook was coupled with an ethos of conquering the desert. Ben Gurion believed that science and technology were the tools by which the young nation could transform a desolate landscape into a modern industrial state. And today, Israel's dazzling achievements in high-tech are a direct descendent of that vision. But so is Israel's environmental crisis, the dark side of technological optimism. Nathan Alterman's line of poetry from the 1930s — "we shall clothe you in a garb of concrete and cement" — set the ideological groundwork for advertising the construction of the trans-Israel highway (the seminal environmental fight of the 1990s), as the fulfillment of the Zionist dream of developing the land.

The great untold story of the last decade in Israel has been the rise of an environmental movement that seeks to redress the balance between human and nature, between Jews and the landscape. Having grown from a handful at the beginning of the 1990s, over 100 local and national environmental organizations now dot the country. Though some environmental work has been reactive — mitigating the effects of unbridled development, a democracy hijacked by special interests, and the privatization of public goods — more environmental work is becoming proactive as it begins to determine an alternative vision of progress, one rooted in ecological health and social justice.

Offset Your Carbon Footprint!

Each of us, as a result of our day-to-day activities, emits greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. As part of the worldwide campaign to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we can offset them while contributing to social projects in Israel through the Good Energy Initiative, affiliated with the Heschel Center for Learning and Leadership (goodenergy.org.il).

Dr. Eilon Schwartz is director of the Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership in Israel and a lecturer at the Melton Centre for Jewish Education at the Hebrew University.

This vision directs the use of technology toward a sustainable future. Renewable energies demand not only a sophisticated level of technological inventiveness but also a commitment to a set of values about our planet and an understanding of our responsibilities to each other, to our children, and to their children. Israel could become a model of sustainability. It could liberate itself from its dependence on fossil fuels and reach energy independence by 2050. It could become a hotbed for clean-tech industries. It could create cities truly designed for inhabitants — cities to walk in and bike in, with thriving downtowns of small businesses benefiting local economies, with community gardens, and with participatory democracy. This is not Gordon's and Kook's vision, nor Ben Gurion's and Alterman's. It is a synthesis of cultural themes, present since the beginning but tailored to the 21st-century challenges of Israel, and of humanity.

Going Green in the Jewish School

Natalie Weiss

The phrase "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" has been replaced with the words "going green," "carbon footprint," and "sustainability." Concern about our dependence on foreign oil and global warming has raised our national consciousness about how lifestyle choices negatively impact the environment. With these changes, educational institutions are beginning to see themselves as significant consumers of the earth's natural resources and therefore contributing to communal environmental problems. Schools, like most buildings and houses in which we live, work, and sleep, are unsustainable and often unhealthy places for children to spend their days.

Making the link between environmentalism and *tikkun olam* is easy for Jewish educators. Judaism teaches that we are stewards of the earth and that we should not be wasteful. Increasingly, day schools are introducing curricula that educate students to be "eco-literate"; students are learning how to lessen the carbon output of their schools, neighborhoods, and homes. At the same time, schools are implementing programs that reduce energy consumption and toxin exposure, while promoting recycling and nutritionally healthy, waste-free lunches.

While some schools adopt new practices informally, others develop mission statements and policies that outline their environmental goals. From an admissions' standpoint, Jewish schools that are competing with secular private or public schools must maintain their place on the cutting edge of educational currency. Savvy parents want to know that their child's school is innovative in all areas, not just academics. Schools wishing to "go green" have many resources, such as greenschools.net and thegreenguide.com, to guide them in this process. And many states are now mandating greener policies.

Over the past five years, The Rabbi Jacob Pressman Academy of Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles has taken concrete steps toward becoming a greener institution. Those efforts include community events as well as particular schoolwide programs and policies:

- An interfaith community viewing of former Vice President Al Gore's documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* followed by a panel discussion.
- Tu B'Shevat tree-planting and neighborhood cleanup. The city helped fund our efforts by providing trees, gloves, and garbage bags.
- Coordinating with our synagogue's green team to pay for recycling services and green cleaning supplies; onsite caterers now recycle.
- Installing carbon-careful products such as motion-sensor lighting in classrooms and restrooms, compact fluorescent light bulbs, and special window glazing that promotes cooling/heating in the classrooms. This effort is paid for, in part, by recycling ink and toner cartridges from our printers and copiers (through recycle4kids.org).
- Reducing paper use by sending bulletins via e-mail.

Next year, our school plans to stop providing individual plastic water bottles (approximately 800 per week) to students in our lunch program, and our parent association and "Green Team" will work closely with our caterer to serve lunches that create less waste. Students who bring lunch from home will be encouraged to replace the ubiquitous ziplock bag for reusable containers. We plan to build a second school building in the future, and it will use solar energy and materials from sustainable sources.

Starting from an early age, we teach our children core Jewish values: God created the

Natalie Weiss is the admissions director of The Rabbi Jacob Pressman Academy of Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles. To learn more about Pressman Academy, visit pressmanacademy.org.

universe, God's creation is good, and that human beings are created in the image of God. Throughout their years here, our students engage in *tikkun olam*, and embrace their role as agents of change. When they are ready to leave our school, they understand that their individual actions can make a significant difference not only in the world we live in today, but also the world we are leaving to future generations.

Sustainable Design

Les Klein

"It's not easy being green."

—Kermit the Frog, 1970

"We are not trying to make good buildings. We are trying to make buildings that are less bad."

—Professor Imre Halasz, 1974

For two phrases to guide architects in creating buildings that are based upon the values inherent in sustainable design, the above would be hard to beat. Both sentiments suggest that human activity has inherent impacts on the environment and that despite our enormous accumulated knowledge, we still cannot be fully sure whether those impacts are or will ultimately be positive or negative.

Sustainable design principles embrace far more broad-reaching issues than merely reduction in energy usage. Increasing the amount of insulation in walls to reduce heat loss or heat gain or utilizing renewable energy sources such as solar panels or wind turbines helps to reduce the amount of nonrenewable resources needed to provide for human comfort. Locating the building near public transit and placing the windows to take advantage of the orientation of the sun can also achieve reductions in energy usage and improve human comfort without additional capital cost.

Sustainable design requires a holistic approach to envisioning, designing, building, and operating environments. But, lest our idealism carry us away, we must keep in mind that designers need to be both environmentally and fiscally responsible; a building project does not achieve any of its goals if it ends up not getting built.

My experiences as the architect of the new home for Congregation Darchei Noam, in Toronto, highlighted many of the issues associated with designing an environmentally responsible synagogue in the "real world." Darchei Noam is committed to the principles of Reconstructionist Judaism, and the congregation ranks *tikkun olam* high among its goals. Thus, when embarking upon the project, the principle of "green design" was among the stated objectives of the project. Yet funds were limited, so each and every option had to be examined for its environmental contributions as well as its impact on the budget.

There are several industrywide systems of measurement to determine whether a project is "green" and the extent to which it measures up to sustainable design standards, including LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and Green Globes. These systems utilize basic categories of components to rate the extent to which a building achieves reductions in its carbon footprint. For example, the basic LEED categories are Site Selection, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, Indoor Air Quality, and Innovation and Design Process.

In the course of designing Darchei Noam, we struggled with numerous "green" options as we balanced the principles of environmental design, fiscal responsibility, and community values. While solar panels were initially proposed for the new flat roof, their capital cost — given that they would generate only a small fraction of the total energy needed — could not justify the expense. However, the Province of Ontario's new program of purchasing energy generated from renewable resources provided a way to utilize the power created by the solar array, subsidize part of the cost of the installation, and provide a highly visible symbol to the community of the congregation's commitment to "green" principles. In addition, a single solar panel was connected to a battery pack that captures, stores, and provides the energy to run the *ner tamid* in the main sanctuary, providing the congregation with a visible connection to its values.

One of the principles of sustainable design urges the uses of locally available materials to reduce the energy involved in transporting materials to the site. In examining options for cladding the front of the structure, stone from local quarries was compared with the preference of the congregation, Jerusalem stone. The use of Jerusalem stone was such a strong symbol of the congregation's connection to *Eretz Yisrael*

Les Klein is a founding principal of Quadrangle Architects Limited, in Toronto, quadrangle.ca.

that the "green" imperative was set aside. The compromise was made to use stone that was half as thick as a full stone face in order to reduce the amount of stone that had to be transported across the ocean.

These decisions exemplify the process that communities and individuals undertake in balancing the human desire to build while ensuring that the building contributes positively to the future of the earth's environment.

Sharing the Earth

Andrea Cohen-Kiener: Does your mandate for climate change come from Genesis?

Rusty Pritchard: Yes, but as an Evangelical Christian, I often go to John 3:16, which starts off, "for God so loved the world." Most Evangelicals hear that word "world" and think it means all the people in the world. But the word is *cosmos*. And it fits with the story of creation in Genesis that God loves his whole creation.

Cohen-Kiener: We need to acknowledge our grandeur and our smallness simultaneously. I've experienced a resistance in the Jewish community to environmental efforts; I've heard often over the past ten years, "we have more important issues to address." Have you experienced similar speed bumps?

Pritchard: The biggest speed bump is a limited conception of God, and a comfortable conservatism that is scared of change. But I ask people, "what is it that we are conserving?" Of course we need to conserve natural resources, God's creation, and families and the ability of families to make a living, and to conserve beautiful places including small towns and farms and places where people live on the land, and communities, and what makes human civilization good and beautiful and diverse. Respecting diversity because it's a blessing from God, we can acknowledge that good things are connected to the created order and have emerged from the created order. That takes us past the shallow conservatism of fearing new ideas and deeper to a conservatism that says there is a good world including what we call a natural world and what derives from it. We ought to do our best to take care of it.

Cohen-Kiener: In my community, there are primarily two speed bumps. First, my people are a minority and there's a natural tendency toward particularism — taking care first of oneself, one's people, one's family. The universalism of environmentalism makes some Jews feel it's not an essentially Jewish issue.

Pritchard: Even though it's not demographically true, Evangelicals also feel like an embattled minority culture. We're a faithful remnant that acknowledges the truth even though the world has gone another direction. Because God means us to live and appreciate a good earth, many conservative Christians are concerned about creation care. Destroying creation and bringing ecological degradation are like ripping pages out of scripture.

Cohen-Kiener: Let's talk about the pervasive value of consumerism in our culture, our deep hungers of the spirit and flesh. Our culture is so illiterate about the hungers of the spirit that we try to fill up that hunger with a new car or fancy vacation. And we're polluting the planet in that effort. We need a counterbalance to consumerism.

Pritchard: We have such a fundamental addiction to consuming. The Jewish Sabbath is an antidote to that hunger. It helps us test what we can give up from material culture. The concept jumps out of every New Testament book — the rhythms of rest and satisfaction and enjoyment of the created order are meant to pervade all of our lives. There are weekly rhythms and cycles of seven years and the jubilee cycle of 49 years of celebrating the sufficiency and the providence of God, where we rest and enjoy and encounter with delight the works of God. The Ten Commandments command not only your rest, but also that of all your household, including everyone who works for you and all of your animals. And the land. They demand we not push to the limits our ecological systems or the people who work for us.

I've just returned from a pastors' conference in New York City where some of the urban churches are trying to reclaim the idea of cities as good places. Evangelicals generally hold an anti-urban bias that comes from a vision of our faith as a remnant existing outside of the mainstream of culture. There's an inability to see cities as places that need investment and work, as places to build community. In a highly urbanized culture we have to rethink our environmental work — conserving not only wilderness or endangered species but also building sustainable communities. I wonder whether there's something to learn there from Jewish tradition, which thrives in cities.

Please visit shma.com to continue this interview.

***Rabbi Andrea Cohen-Kiener**, director of Connecticut's Interreligious Eco-Justice Network, is the spiritual leader of Congregation Pnai Or of Central Conn. She is author of* Life on Earth: A User's Guide, *and* For All Who Call: A Guide to Enhancing Prayer Instruction in the Jewish Community. *She is also the translator of* Conscious Community, A Guide to Spiritual Development, *written in the early years of World War II by Rabbi Kalanymous Kalman Shapira.* ***Dr. Lowell "Rusty" Pritchard**, a resource economist, is the national director of outreach for the Evangelical Environmental Network and the editor of* Creation Care *magazine, a Christian environmental quarterly.*

GUARDIANS OF ISRAEL



Throughout Israel's history, **Magen David Adom** has served her people and the government mandated ambulance and emergency medical first response service, providing disaster relief and blood services. **MDA** is "behind every headline," always vigilant, responding to every call and dispatching its fleet of more than 700 emergency vehicles to care for hundreds of thousands of patients every year.

On this, Israel's 60th anniversary, **American Friends of Magen David Adom** also marks our 68th year of supporting the heroic men and women of **Magen David Adom**. For 78 years, **MDA** has been there for Israel's people, in good times and bad, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

With your support, **American Friends of Magen David Adom** builds and renovates MDA Stations and contributes urgently needed vehicles, paramedic training, communications equipment, medications and medical equipment, as well as flak jackets, helmets and security for our facilities.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow, American Friends of Magen David Adom is there to "Save Lives in Israel."

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF
MAGEN DAVID ADOM
ARMDI

SAVING LIVES IN ISRAEL

Please Donate Now!

www.afmda.org

888 Seventh Avenue, Suite 403 • New York, NY 10106
Toll-Free : (866) 632-2763 • Tel : (212) 757-1627
info@afmda.org
Israel: Tel: (057) 761-4220 • IsraelOffice@afmda.org

Birds and Life

The Life of the Skies: Birding at the End of Nature by Jonathan Rosen
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 336 pages, $24
Reviewed by Haim Watzman

It's hardly surprising that Hayyim Nachman Bialik chose a bird as the central image of his first published Hebrew poem. For a Diaspora Jew caught in Europe, longing for another life, a bird symbolized freedom and the ability to soar over physical, political, and psychological barriers.

It's also not surprising that Bialik didn't know, or at least didn't tell us, what kind of bird it was who brought him a message from his brothers in Zion. Bialik tells us all about his conversation with the bird, but nothing about the bird's markings, habits, the shape of its beak, wings, and tail, or the peculiarities of its song.

Poor birds. We so frequently press them into use as symbols that we often forget to see them. It's a rare writer who can combine an appreciation for the bird of literature with knowledge of the bird as an animal. One of those rare writers is Jonathan Rosen, who now offers us a wonderful account of his observations of and thoughts about, American woodpeckers, Israeli hoopoes, and many more in between.

Rosen is a writer by trade, a novelist, journalist, and editor. He tells us (perhaps once too often) that his upper middle-class Jewish upbringing prepared him for the life of an intellectual, not a naturalist. But his love of poetry came together with a love of science, and that led him to writers who wrote and thought about nature — in particular, Henry David Thoreau. So he was well-primed when, twelve years ago, a chance comment over a Shabbat lunch in Manhattan — "The warblers will be coming through Central Park soon" — induced him to sign up for a birdwatching course at the Audubon Society.

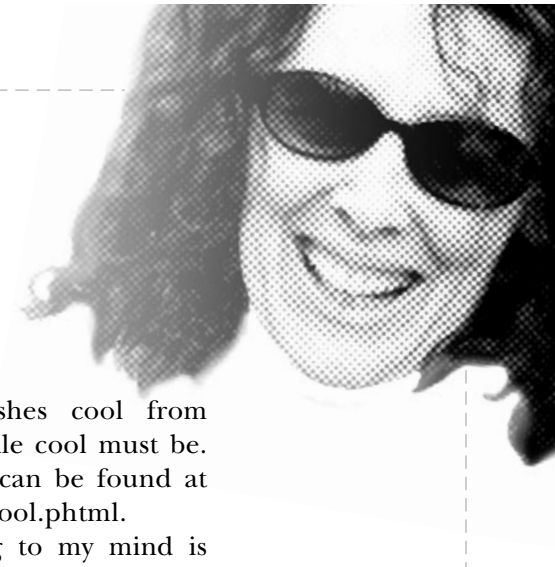
Thus began a saga that reached a climax when Rosen flew to Louisiana in the hopes of spying a bird that most people thought already extinct, the ivory-billed woodpecker. This, the largest of North American woodpeckers, occupied a narrow ecological niche, eating the grubs that attack recently dead trees. These birds require old-growth forests with plenty of trees several centuries old, so that enough old trees die regularly to be attacked by insects. And they need a warm and moist area where dead trees decay quickly. Ivory-bills used to flourish in the Mississippi delta, east Texas, and the Florida panhandle, but the last old forests in these areas were clear-cut in the mid-20th century. The last adequately documented sighting of an ivory-bill was in 1944, but occasionally birdwatchers and hunters report seeing them. It was one such sighting, in 1999, that impelled Rosen to embark from the Upper West Side to a mosquito-infested swamp in hopes that he, too, would be granted a view of this elusive, and possibly non-existent, bird.

He wasn't. The ivory-bills either weren't there or weren't showing themselves. But Rosen tells a fascinating story of his sojourn. And like the whirling, intermixing flocks of migrants he sees on a trip to Israel's rift valley, he interweaves his own story with Thoreau's observations at Walden Pond; with the story of America's great bird painter, John James Audubon; with the observations of naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace; with speculations on evolution and the nature of the world; and with much else besides. He also quotes a lot of fine poetry that helps the reader both see birds as natural objects and conceive of the meaning they bear in the human mind.

Impressively, and unusually for a book of this sort, Rosen explicitly rejects Thoreau's pretense that a writer can negate himself, recording the landscape as it is untouched by human action, thought, history, and current events. "I cannot belong to that school of nature writing where you set off with a knapsack and nothing else — seemingly without parents or children or religion or tradition or friends or country." The September 11 attacks and the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada are part of his birdwatching experience, as are his dying father, his family, his religion, and his own biography.

Factually, birds do not sing for us. "They sing not for our pleasure or their own, but for intensely practical reasons," Rosen reminds us — they must mark out territory, attract mates, deter predators. But how can we not seek a message in their song? How can we not make them ours? "Sing, my bird, of wonders from a land in whose spring eternity resides," Bialik pleads in his poem. Rosen seeks, and hears, a more subtle and complex message, one for the birds, and human beings, of our age.

Haim Watzman is the author of Company C: An American's Life as a Citizen-Soldier in Israel *and of* A Crack in the Earth: A Journey Up Israel's Rift Valley. *He blogs at http://south-jerusalem.com.*



A MOVING TARGET

Susan Berrin

Several months ago I stood listening to the Rebirth Brass Band at the Maple Leaf in New Orleans. I say "stood" because within moments of the first blast of the trumpet, the crowd was dancing. Sitting still was not an option. The music transcended traditional jazz, creating a fusion of sound and rhythm and energy; it shook loose a wave of joy in that sweaty, overcrowded room.

At that time, three of the *Sh'ma* columns reflecting on "cool" had been published, and I was thinking about how to keep that conversation lively and probing. Fusion stuck on my tongue. What is it about being solid enough in my identity to be able to invite another to the table; to know so well the limits of self, the skin that contains me — that separates me from everything that is not me and from the common air I share with my neighbor; my sensibilities from those of my friends, my beliefs and practices from those of the universe around me? Then, can we ease the boundaries, look carefully at the seam and rend it just so, to let in the sounds and smells and experiences of another tradition? We've been so frightened the past decades by decreasing numbers that we've double-stitched the seams. Here's my thought on what's cool: Fusion. I don't mean intermarriage or assimilation. I mean loosening the stitches; adding cumin to the kreplach — or maybe *baharat*, a blend of several hot and sweet Eastern spices. Let's mix in with the flavors and smells and sounds of traditions that are not necessarily our own. In Israel, a Jewish fusion of tradition is possible (if not often practiced). But how do we experiment elsewhere?

Each month this year, I've invited a guest columnist to think about the nature of "cool" and why it holds such power over so many. Some of the columnists wondered why we, an ancient rooted people, continuously strive to "market" Judaism as cool (and why so much money is thrown at ideas that are faddishly "cool"). Others ruminated on how they are or are not, might be, have been, or have never been — that's me — cool, and what distinguishes cool from kitch; how fleeting and fickle cool must be. The collection of musings can be found at www.shma.com/reflecting_cool.phtml.

What keeps coming to my mind is that cool is a moving target — a mysterious code that pushes life beyond banality. It is a process (not product) of searching for authenticity and wisdom. It requires risk — that is, it requires stepping (knowingly) toward the precipice, keeping the flame of inquisitiveness alit while stretching. It demands a fullness of truth-telling, truth-fullness.

It is not about youthfulness. Though much innovation comes from young people who creatively see connections because they aren't blinded by assumptions, we might find a winning synthesis by matching up those fresh eyes with the wisdom of experience. I've watched some of the deepest, smartest, and would-be valuable thinking pushed aside because it belonged to someone with wrinkles. That's not cool.

Also not cool: being a people deeply attuned to the importance of knowledge but willing to live with the enormity of Jewish illiteracy; having a history of global wandering but being closed, utterly, to most places outside those we know most recently and best; possessing a magnificent body of ethical literature that is routinely ignored by those who ought to know it most intimately; tolerating a search for God that is shallow, unchallenging, and inadequate; and maintaining an odd interplay in contemporary Jewish life that both recognizes our cultural efflorescence yet also floats a widespread perception of embattlement, of communal exhaustion.

I hope this year's columns have offered some compelling thinking about "cool" and from that thinking a bit more reflection — a willingness to sit longer with an idea, choose a different side to observe, push harder against self-congratulation, challenge narcissism. New can be great, or facile. Old can be retrogressive, or refreshing. Cool is a moving target — much like all that is vivid, and vibrant, and alive.



Editor of *Sh'ma*, SUSAN BERRIN, also edited two anthologies, *A Heart of Wisdom: Making the Jewish Journey from Mid-Life Through the Aging Years* (Jewish Lights) and *Celebrating the New Moon: A Rosh Chodesh Anthology* (Jason Aronson).

Sh'ma

Sigi Ziering Ethics

This year our Sigi Ziering column focuses on the ethics of silence. Each month an esteemed guest columnist wrestles with questions concerning silence and its impact on Jewish life and the world around us. The column is sponsored by Bruce Whizin and Marilyn Ziering in honor of Marilyn's husband, Sigi Ziering, of blessed memory. Visit shma.com to view the series of columns with responses.

Broken Silence

Andrew Silow-Carroll

Last year the *New York Times* ran a despairing series of articles on how hard it was becoming to prosecute street crimes because of witness intimidation. Cooperating with the prosecution could mean a death sentence for a witness, or her family. If this weren't bad enough, a perverse "no snitching" ethic began to pervade hip-hop culture, in part fueled by minority communities' sometimes justified mistrust of the police. A mainstream rapper named Cam'ron told "60 Minutes" he wouldn't go to the police even if he knew a serial killer were living next door.

Cam'ron was posturing, but community activists and anti-violence advocates noted that a gangsters code had become, as one put it, "a cultural norm."

Earlier this year, members of the Spinka Hasidic movement, including one of its grand rabbis, were indicted on (and pleaded not guilty to) a series of federal indictments for conspiracy, mail fraud, and money laundering. Some in the Hasidic community were scandalized — in part because the case was said to be based on tips from a Spinka insider. "People are very shell-shocked about the whole thing on many levels," a representative of the Orthodox Union told the *Forward*. "Number one, that our neighbors and friends are implicated, and number two, that an act of *mesira* on this level was perpetrated by one of our own."

In Jewish law, *mesira* is the prohibition against turning over a fellow Jew to the civil (presumably non-Jewish) authorities. It reflects the reality in which Jews lived for centuries, when secular cops and courts were hostile to Jews, and prisons worse. The *Shulchan Aruch*, the code of Jewish law, treats a "*moser*," or informer, as an *akum* — someone outside the Jewish community.

There are exceptions, important ones. A public menace can be handed over to the authorities, as can someone who is physically or even psychologically abusing another.

The last point is central to a topic most likely to set off debates over *mesira*: the sexual abuse of children and other vulnerable people. A spate of highly publicized abuse cases has exposed a rift between communal leaders who would prefer that such cases be handled "internally," and victims and their advocates who insist that invoking *mesira* has become a way to protect the reputations of the accused and their employers.

Some rabbis have heeded this frustration and issued opinions reminding their followers that it is permitted to inform authorities in such cases. Victims' rights advocates say that's not enough — "permitted" is nowhere near as strong as "required."

While schools, organizations, and religious authorities wrestle with the question, some enterprising journalists have investigated and exposed instances of abuse that may never have reached the authorities. The *New York Jewish Week* and the *Baltimore Jewish Times* have done important work in this regard, giving voice to victims. The reports are inevitably met with outrage. Members of the community have accused the papers of character assassination and worse. Just as inevitably, these same communities undertake a process of soul-searching and recognize that victims need to be encouraged to speak out, and abusers brought to justice.

Mesira has its function in Jewish law and culture, and the security we currently enjoy as American citizens doesn't erase a long history of persecution by civil authorities — nor prevent its return. But when the laws of *mesira* clash with the pursuit of *tzedek*, justice, the choice seems clear.

Andrew Silow-Carroll is editor-in-chief of the New Jersey Jewish News.

June 2008/Sivan 5768

Sh'ma

To subscribe: 877-568-SHMA
www.shma.com
Jewish Family & Life
P.O. Box 9129 Newton, MA 02464
Change Service Requested

NON PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 55356
BOSTON, MA