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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

University College

Liberal Arts

The Heaven & Earth Haggadah

הגדה של פסח

by

Krista Hyde

A thesis presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
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Introduction

Preparing for Passover: Greening the Clean

I wrote the following article as a blog post for a website I created documenting the preparation and celebration of an "Eco-Passover." The post discusses how to prepare for the holiday in an ecologically-friendly way.

What's the biggest obstacle to an eco-kosher Passover? Well, what is the biggest part of preparing for Pesach? Ask anyone who observes the holiday; it is the "Big Clean." Last year, I hired someone to clean my home for me. It was nice not to have to do it myself, but I was less than satisfied with the results. I wonder about hiring someone again...Do I have the funds? What wage is appropriate?

Issues of tzedakah and living wages aside, what about the direct environmental impact of the cleaning? Because I work in the Environmental Health & Safety department in a Medical School, I am, shall we say, a bit of a germophobe. I admit: I regularly use hospital-grade disinfectant on my kitchen and bathroom. I know I'm part of the problem, using chlorine bleach in great quantities and eradicating any last c. difficile or MRSA that might be lurking on my countertops. I've helped create drug-resistant strains of these bugs while I damaged the environment, but it makes me feel safer, cleaner. I haven't gotten the flu this year, while others in my department have. I imagine that can be at least partially attributed to using high-level disinfectant on my sinks.

I look at a list of natural cleaning products that I ran across online; it includes lemons, baking soda, and vinegar. Those are food products, safe enough to put in my mouth. I ask myself, *Are they kidding?* I want to disinfect, not make a pie! How can these possibly *clean* anything? I've never even heard of borax before, but it is supposed to help with mold. I normally eradicate mold with full-strength Clorox bleach. Uninspired by the all-natural items, I decide to check out commercially-produced natural products--Seventh Generation, etc. Their websites don't inform me about eliminating 99.9% of germs like Lysol's does; instead, they gush about the positive benefits of aromatherapy from the essential oils in their solutions. (Nothing smells like clean to me but bleach or ammonia.) The idea of cleaning glass with newsprint, a common recommendation on "natural" cleaning websites, doesn't seem realistic. I imagine my mirrors streaked with black ink.

After all, I already *have* many bottles and packages of "regular" cleaning products. What's better, throwing them away to get new bottles of Seventh Generation or Sun & Earth? Should I use these up, since I already own them and they're already going to end up in the sewer and the landfill? This seems wiser than just pouring my current bottle of bleach down the drain. I don't want to waste them, but I realize I can't buy them anymore. I may run out of some of these traditional products before The Big Clean; those will have to be assessed and replaced as they are finished. Sadly, my Swiffers (convenient, disposable sweepers) have to go; my conscience will no longer allow me to value cat hair-free floors over the pollution of our earth.

Once I've begun considering these issues, more pop up. When I clean, I generally use mounds of paper towels; that's not environmentally friendly. I know I can switch to recycled, but I should use rags whenever possible, as they're reusable and I can make some from ratty clothes that

are no longer wearable (upcycling!). I have seen organic cleaning cloths at the local natural food stores, but I can't imagine spending more on rags than I do on clothes!

Since that blog post was written, I've changed my mind about natural cleaning products. I clean less frequently now, and my bathtub never sparkles. However, I've come to treat this impossible hygiene standard as oppressive (especially to women), as well as unhealthy. I'll get my flu shot this year, and wash my hands, but from now on, my house is free of "Scrubbing Bubbles."

The time between Purim and Pesach is anticipatory, designed in various ways to heighten expectation. When I was growing up, conversation about Passover food shopping and cleaning began at Purim. My grandmother, until her last days, *schlepped* cartons of Pesach dishes up from the basement and assigned us all our Pesach duties. She was terribly exacting, and she religiously supervised our going through our coat pockets for gum wrappers.

The *Seders* were, of course, the main event, but as an adult, I now realize how much those family experiences around the dining room table felt important precisely because there was so much anticipatory preparation. The readying behind the scenes, the cooking, and the learning for the *Seders* in the weeks before created the necessary atmosphere for a momentous week. The *Seders* loom large in my memory now because the devoted labors of advanced planning—like the planning before a *bar-mitzvah* or a wedding—sanctify the occasion and make it awesome.

Often it is the behind-the-scenes work, that which we are likely to take for granted, that is especially important. The cliché tells us that G-d is in the details. At no season is that more apparent than in Spring, and Passover is the holiday of Spring. It is now, when we see the crocuses determinedly rising from ground so recently snow-covered, when we see buds on the branches and we know that we are in transition between winter's barren landscape and what will soon be a lush green world, that we are most inclined to be hopeful, to believe in a power for good in the world, a generous lifegiving force, a force that liberates Nature from the cold and human beings from slavery.

All of which is to say that G-d and grandmothers have a good deal in common. Their work is often done so reliably that unless we pause to take notice we might forget to appreciate the greatness in the details. If we have been lucky in our lives, we have found comfort in an infinity of detailed loving attentions, from mittens to hot lunches, blessings that are blessings precisely because they were given naturally and unconditionally.

Miriam's Time

Moses is the main actor of the season, and Moses, Aaron, and the priesthood are the principle characters of the Torah readings of these weeks. But I like to think of the weeks between Purim and Pesach as Miriam's time. For, behind the central liberation myth of our people, the drama of Moses pleading with Pharaoh, the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and the fulfillment of the

dream of nationhood in the Promised Land, is the story of the bravery of a slave mother and her daughter, and an Egyptian Princess who was moved by the sight of a slave baby in a basket.

At an even earlier moment, we are told that though the Pharaoh ordered the midwives to see to it that there would be no male babies, Shifra and Puah, the Hebrew midwives, defied these orders and bravely did their work. In these small ways, the Passover story recognizes the significance of women's work and courage. The Talmud, too, acknowledges the centrality of midwives, mothers, and sisters in this liberation story. One tradition insists that it is *because of the merit of the women* that G-d freed us from bondage. This story elaborates that it was women's faith and hopefulness that allowed the miracles to occur. For when the Hebrew men, desperate because of Pharaoh's order to destroy their sons, decided it would be better not to have children at all, their wives and daughters, tradition tells us, maintained their attractiveness and persuaded them to change their minds and not give up on the Jewish future. When it came time to construct the Tabernacle, Moses was ready to reject the jewelry and mirrors of women as gifts out of which to make holy ritual items because he worried that they symbolized vanity. But he was prevailed upon to accept these items, and it turned out that they were particularly pleasing to G-d because they were the signs of the vitality and hope of the people.

Every year at my family *Seder* we make my mother tell us about Passover when she was a little girl in Siberia. My mother's family are *hasidim*, and when she was a child, and Hitler was invading Poland, her family, along with many others (but tragically not with enough others) willingly abandoned all of their possessions, were packed into cattle cars, and were deported to Siberia to live out the war years in the safety of Stalinist Russia.

Though practicing religion was strictly forbidden, the first thing they did when they got to Siberia was reconstruct from memory the Jewish calendar. These Jews, who gave up everything they had, risked it all to bake *matzoh*. My mother remembers that they made *matzoh* in the middle of the night and that the children stood watch to sound warning in case someone might be coming. As in the Exodus of old, in Russia in the 1940s, the courage of women and children was intimately connected to the preservation of a Jewish way of life. What is so moving here are the Jewish priorities. They saved their lives before their things but understood that it was only worth it if they did not lose their identity in the process.

Our tradition, in saying that it is because of the merit of women that the people were freed, hints at an understanding of the value of the intricate work behind the scenes and the importance of details in a Jewish life and community. Pesach especially invites us to take notice of every crumb. Such attention makes us mindful of and grateful for not only the grand miracles of liberation but also for the small miracles of our everyday lives.

--"Attending to Details: A Pesach Meditation on G-d, Grandmothers, and Gratitude," *Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility*, January 2000, by Lori Lefkowitz.

Search for Chametz - בדיקת חמץ

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קָדַשׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְנָצוּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר הַמִּיץ.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al bi-ur chameitz.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who has made us a sacred People with his commandments and commanded us to remove all hametz.

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְּאִפְּאֵר בְּרִשְׁוֵתֵי דְּלֵא חֲמֵתֵהּ וְדִלְאָהּ בְּעֵרְתָהּ וְדִלְאָהּ יְדָ עֲנָא לֵהּ לְבָטֵל וְלִהְיוּ הִפְקָר כּוּ עֲפָרָא דְאַרְעָא.
Kol chamira vachami-ah d'ika virshuti d'la chamiteih ud'la vi-arteih ud'la y'dana leih libateil v'lehevei hefkeir k'afra d'ara.

All the sourdough and hametz in my possession that I have not seen and not eradicated is hereby nullified and made like the dust of the earth.

On the Seder Plate

The seder plate is a highly stylized ritual object; its contents are determined by tradition. The “typical” seder plate contains the following items: chazeret (first of the “bitter herbs,” romaine lettuce), z'roa (roasted shankbone), charoset, maror (second of the “bitter herbs,” horseradish), karpas (“greens,” a vegetable other than bitter herbs, such as parsley or celery), and beitzah (roasted egg).

The seder plate of a progressive Jewish community also includes an orange, which symbolizes those people who have been traditionally marginalized in the Jewish community. An even more contemporary tradition includes olives on the seder plate.

The seder table also holds matzoh (the bread of affliction, or poverty), bowls of salt water, which symbolize the bitter tears of the enslaved, an Elijah’s cup, and (among feminist communities), Miriam’s Well. Elijah’s cup is a goblet filled to the brim with wine; Miriam’s Well, with pure water.

On the seder table, on the seder plate, the maror (usually horseradish), symbolizes the bitterness of slavery.

Charoset, a mixture created to resemble the mortar our people were forced to make as slaves in Egypt, is a sweet dish made from apples, nuts and wine (Ashkenazi), or dates, figs, and ginger (Sephardic).

The shankbone is a roasted lamb shank, a reminder of the Paschal sacrifice, which the Israelites were commanded by G-d to make before the tenth plague. The blood from the Paschal sacrifice was smeared on the doorposts of the slaves as a sign to the angel of death, who would pass over their houses while taking the lives of all the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, “Passover Sacrifice,” 556-7) The Paschal sacrifice no longer takes place because of the destruction of the Temple. Vegetarians can use a roasted beet in place of the lamb shank.

Beitzah, the roasted egg, represents rebirth, life and death, and the change of seasons.

Karpas, often parsley, represents new growth and the appearance of the green of spring. It reminds the seder participants of the cyclical nature of the Jewish calendar, as well. A tradition at Tu B'shevat is to plant the seeds for the parsley that will be harvested at Pesach.

Chazeret, is the second bitter herb, usually lettuce.

The orange on the seder plate is a new practice, begun by Susannah Heschel. A blessing was written by Aggie Goldenholz and Susan Pittelman, from "Our Community Women's Seder," Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Leader:

The orange carries within itself the seeds of its own rebirth. When we went forth from the Narrow Place, Mitzrayim (Egypt), the Jewish people passed through a narrow birth canal and broke the waters of the Red Sea. As we women step forward to claim our full role in Judaism, we too can be full participants in a Jewish rebirth. Our place in Judaism will be as visible as the orange on our seder plate.

All:

And thus we were born into the world. The wisdom of women who were midwives, like Shifra and Puah, made that birth possible.

Here, an explanation of the orange on the seder plate tradition from ritualwell.org.

In the early 1980s, while speaking at Oberlin College Hillel, Susannah Heschel was introduced to an early feminist Haggadah that suggested adding a crust of bread on the seder plate, as a sign of solidarity with Jewish lesbians (there's as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the seder plate). Heschel felt that to put bread on the seder plate would be to accept that Jewish lesbians and gay men violate Judaism like chametz violates Passover. So, at her next seder, she chose an orange as a symbol of inclusion of gays and lesbians and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community. She offered the orange as a symbol of the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life. In addition, each orange segment had a few seeds that had to be spit out – a gesture of spitting out, repudiating the homophobia of Judaism. While lecturing, Heschel often mentioned her custom as one of many feminist rituals that have been developed in the last twenty years. She writes, "Somehow, though, the typical patriarchal maneuver occurred: my idea of an orange and my intention of affirming lesbians and gay men were transformed. Now the story circulates that a MAN said to me that a woman belongs on the bimah as an orange on the seder plate. A woman's words are attributed to a man, and the affirmation of lesbians and gay men is erased. Isn't that precisely what's happened over the centuries to women's ideas?"

Finally, olives on the seder plate symbolize peace in the Middle East and all over the world. In rabbinical student Rachel Barenblat's haggadah, *The Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah for Passover*, she states: "The final item on our seder plate is an olive. After the Flood, Noah's dove brought back an olive branch as a sign that the earth was habitable once again. Today ancient olive groves are destroyed by violence, making a powerful symbol of peace into a casualty of war. We keep an olive on our seder plate as an embodied prayer for peace, in the Middle east and everywhere where war destroys lives, hopes, and the freedoms we celebrate tonight." (33)

The table also includes a special goblet of wine for Elijah the prophet; it is considered the “fifth cup” poured at the seder. Elijah’s presence is summoned at the seder by the cup, in the hope that the prophet will someday return as an unknown guest, and will bring future redemption. (Telushkin, Joseph. *Jewish Literacy*. New York: William Morrow, 2001.)

Miriam’s Well is another special goblet set at the table, but it is a new tradition. Miriam’s Well is filled with water. Seder participants are often reminded that “wine is more precious than water, until there is no water.”

Matzoh is also included on the seder table. Matzoh is unleavened bread, and the simplest of all foods. It is symbolic of the absence of ego. We can live without leaven; what else can we live without? What other nonessential items, relationships, or behaviors would we like to leave behind after Pesach? What currently enslaves us?

The salt water, in which we dip parsley (twice), is symbolic of the tears of the enslaved people.

Blessings

We begin the Seder with blessings. Blessings allow us to create holiness within the everyday. They make the profane into the sacred, thus allowing us to see the holiness that exists in even the most day-to-day actions and objects. This holiness is sometimes hidden, because we have learned to un-see it. Blessings remove our blinders, and can allow us to see the sacred. Anything can be a sacrament, but creating a sacrament means creating a relationship between ourselves and the behavior or object...and something sacred can no longer be treated as a commodity.

Lawrence Kushner, in *The Book of Miracles*, addresses this seeing and un-seeing.

When the people of Israel crossed through the Red Sea, they witnessed a great miracle. Some say it was the greatest miracle that ever happened. On that day they saw a sight more awesome than all the visions of the prophets combined. The sea split and the waters stood like great walls, while Israel escaped to freedom on the distant shore. Awesome. But not for everyone.

Two people, Reuven and Shimon, hurried along among the crowd crossing through the sea. They never once looked up. They noticed only that the ground under their feet was still a little muddy like a beach at low tide.

“Yucch!” said Reuven, “there’s mud all over this place!”

“Blecch!” said Shimon. I have muck all over my feet!”

“This is terrible,” answered Reuven. “When we were slaves in Egypt, we had to make our bricks out of mud, just like this!”

“Yeah,” said Shimon. “There’s no difference between being a slave in Egypt and being free here.”

And so it went, Reuven and Shimon whining and complaining all the way to freedom. For them there was no miracle. Only mud. Their eyes were closed. They might as well have been asleep. [Exodus Rabbah 24:1]

People see only what they understand, not necessarily what lies in front of them. For example, if you saw a television set, you would know what it was and how to operate it. But imagine someone who had never seen a television. To such a person it would be just a strange and useless box. Imagine being in a video store, filled with movies and

stories and music, and not even knowing it. How saw when something is right before your eyes, but you are asleep to it. It is like that with our world too.

Something like this happened to Jacob, our father. He dreamed of a ladder joining heaven and earth. Upon it angels were climbing up and down. Then G-d appeared and talked to Jacob. When he awoke the next morning, Jacob said to himself, "Wow! G-d was in this very place all along, and I didn't even know it!" [Genesis 28:16]

Rabbi Shelomo Yitzchaki, who lived in France eight hundred years ago and whom we call Rashi (after the initials of his name) explained what Jacob meant: "If I had known that G-d would be here, then I wouldn't have gone to sleep!"

To be a Jew means to wake up and to keep your eyes open to the many beautiful, mysterious, and holy things that happen all around us every day. Many of them are like little miracles: when we wake up and see the morning light, when we taste food and grow strong, when we learn from others and grow wise, when we hug the people we love and feel warm, when we help those around us and feel good. All these and more are there for us every day, but we must open our eyes to see them; otherwise we will be like Reuven and Shimon, able to see only mud.

Suppose, right now, your eyes are closed. How do you wake up?

Blessings allow us the opportunity to create relationships with and to truly see the miracles of creation. When we bless, we no longer see blessed things as simple commodities, valuable only as a means to an end. It is much more difficult to treat the earth and her resources as a toolbox for consumption when we are aware of her inherent value and holiness. In *Let the Earth Teach You Torah*, Ellen Bernstein and Dan Fink describe this relationship-making: "...the very act of reciting blessings forces us to consider our actions like eating and seeing and smelling rather than just lapse into senseless and mechanistic responses to our environment." (p. 10)

The practice of blessing leads to a mindfulness of the holiness in everything. Much of our environmental crisis stems from mindless consumption. In blessing, Judaism has evolved a built-in protection against taking the earth for granted. A blessing can be understood as transferring ownership from G-d to human hands. In the Talmud, we are taught that humans may not take pleasure in any material objects until we have recited a blessing over it; in fact, taking pleasure in something without a blessing makes us "guilty of misappropriating sacred property." (*Brachot* 35) By blessing one's food, the blesser acknowledges that G-d is responsible for meeting our needs, and that all we have comes from the earth. After all, as in the story of Job:

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations?

Speak if you have understanding.

Do you know who fixed its dimensions

Or who measured it with a line?

Onto what were its bases sunk?

Who set its cornerstone

When the morning stars sang together

And all the divine beings shouted for joy?

[38:4-7]

Have you penetrated to the sources of the sea,

Or walked in the recesses of the deep?

Have the gates of death been disclosed to you?

Have you seen the gates of deep darkness?

Have you surveyed the expanses of the earth?
If you know these--tell Me.

[38:16-18]

By what path is the west wind dispersed,
The east wind scattered over the earth?
Who cut a channel for the torrents
And a path for the thunderstorms,
To rain down on uninhabited land,
On the wilderness where no man is,
To saturate the desolate wasteland,
And make the crop of grass sprout forth?
Does the rain have a father?
Who begot the dewdrops?
From whose belly came forth the ice?
Who gave birth to the frost of heaven?
Water congeals like stone,
And the surface of the deep compacts.

Can you tie cords to Pleiades
Or undo the reins of Orion?
Can you lead out Mazzaroth in its season,
Conduct the Bear with her sons?
Do you know the laws of heaven
Or impose its authority on earth?

Can you send up an order to the clouds
For an abundance of water to cover you?
Can you dispatch the lightning on a mission
And have it answer you, "I am ready"?

[38:24-35]

Despite our technology and our progress, our talents and our gifts, without "nature," or the earth herself, humans cannot create even a single bite of food or a drop of water. Though many of us live almost completely separately from the natural world, we are a part of her, and the continuation of all peoples depends on our interconnectedness with her. If all the earth belongs to G-d, we can no longer treat the natural world as a commodity.

We live in a world of unthinking consumption. By our act of blessing, we break the first chain in that problematic culture. The earth will not be mended by simply recycling, for example: authentic change will require a reduction in our levels of consumption. Simply put, blessings remind us to pay attention. Abraham Joshua Heschel, in *G-d in Search of Man*, reminds us that "[t]he insights of wonder must be constantly kept alive." Blessings fan just this flame. Before drinking a glass of water, we thank G-d for speaking creation into being, a reminder that G-d has place in the natural world. When we eat a fruit for the first time in its season each year, witness a shooting star, or view a rainbow, we remember with a blessing that G-d, the sacred, is connected to the natural. How can we abuse nature, our earth, when we know that each part of it is holy?

הדלקת הנרות - Light Yom Tov Candles

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר של [שבת ושל] יום טוב.
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel [Shabbat v'shel] yom tov.

Praised are you, G-d, whose Presence fills the universe, who has sanctified our lives through your commandments and commanded us to kindle the lights [for Shabbat and] of the Passover festival.

Creating Sacred Time

Lighting the Yom Tov candles creates Sacred Time. For Jews, Sacred Time creates Sacred Space, all over the earth. Sacred time initiates an aura of holiness around the holiday. This blessing over the candles marks the beginning of a sacred day. Sacred time is very important in Judaism; the holiness of time is greater than the holiness of Israel. Sacred time is considered spirit, or soul, itself...in the form of time. (Heschel *The Sabbath* 82) All of us are aware of the sacred time of Shabbat, and linking Sabbath observance with lowered consumption and environmental conservation is certainly not a new concept.

There are sacred times in our tradition that are outside the holiday observances, though, and these are sometimes forgotten. For example, outside the Jewish environmentalist movement, few people have considered the ecological advantages of concepts like Shemittah and Jubilee. The sabbatical year is an especially important concept, because, like Shabbat, it allows for the birth of ideas in ways to live our lives as well as an introduction of new attitudes toward the earth. Leviticus 25:2-12 (Parsha B'har) states:

“When you enter the land that I assign to you, the land shall observe a sabbath of G-d. Six years you may sow your field and six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in the yield. But in the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath of complete rest, a sabbath of G-d: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your untrimmed vines; it shall be a year of complete rest for the land. But you may eat whatever the land during its sabbath will produce--you, your male and female slaves, the hired and bound laborers who live with you, and your cattle and the beasts in your land may eat all its yield. You shall count off seven weeks of years--seven times seven years--so that the period of seven weeks of years gives you a total of forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the horn loud; in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month--the Day of Atonement--you shall have the horn sounded throughout your land and you shall hallow the fiftieth year. You shall proclaim release throughout the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: each of you shall return to your holding and each of you shall return to your family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, neither shall you reap the aftergrowth or harvest the untrimmed vines, for it is a jubilee. It shall be holy to you: you may only eat the growth direct from the field.”

Thus, the Israelites were commanded not only to take a weekly rest for themselves (and their servants and animals); additionally, they were commanded to desist from working the land every seven years. The land was provided with her own shabbat.

Lori Lefkowitz writes about the ecological ramifications of such a Sabbath for the land in her “Contemporary Reflection,” a commentary on the mitzvot of Shabbat, Shemittah, and Jubilee.

In parashat B’har, G-d declares to Moses that the land is a sacred trust and commands the people to observe periods of comprehensive release. This parashah invites us to consider how, in each generation, we can best serve as guarantors of this trust, respect the duty to rest ourselves and our natural resources, and experience “release.” The legislation in *B’har* presumes the value of balance and regulates a balance among productivity, rest, and relinquishment. Inasmuch as punctuating productivity with long pauses lends perspective to life and encourages us to express gratitude for the earth’s bounty, we may wonder what regulations we require today to help us nurture ourselves, one another, and the planet...

B’har affirms that the land belongs to G-d, and it must be permitted to observe its Sabbaths. The sensibility that the Land of Israel has a responsibility all its own to the Creator recognizes nature’s independence from humanity. The land must be permitted, just like human servants, to praise creation through Shabbat. In the psalmist’s words: *kol han’shamah t’halel Yah*, “All that breathes praises G-d” (Psalm 150). The earth must speak its own gratitude.

In the Torah, the earth is an expressive organism. We read that when Miriam died, “the community was without water” (Numbers 20:2). Observing, as it were, its mourning for a heroine whose miracles were all associated with water, the earth dries up. To hear the speech of the earth is a blessing; but if we do not listen, the consequences of our deafness to the planet are traumatic. The ecology movement reminds us of what our biblical forebears understood: the independent consciousness of nature.

Nature’s independence is trumpeted on Yom Kippur after a fifty-year countdown. This is when we must (as the Liberty Bell translates the verse) “proclaim Liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof” (Leviticus 25:10)...

The laws of the sabbatical year echo biblical Creation. The rhythm of the work week undergoes a cosmic magnification: people, imitating the Creator, are productive for six days and then rest. Nature is productive for six years and rests; and then geometrically, after the land has maintained this rhythm for seven cycles of seven: jubilee. The *yovel*, the jubilee, is a call to restore primal order: indentured servants are freed, debts are forgiven, and property is restored to its original owners. Here is a caution against struggling to amass more, and against warring over real estate--reminding us that all things are, eventually, released (one way or another) from our possession and control. After the divine promise to Noah that humanity would never again be destroyed by flood, G-d devises the jubilee as a peaceful strategy for restoring the world to its original state...

The land, our possessions, our bodies, our children, and we ourselves are a sacred trust, and it is not our right to be infinitely demanding on them. We are commanded to rest, not when we are exhausted or having a breakdown, but regularly, as we count the days to Shabbat, to the seven years to the land’s sabbatical, and to the forty-nine years to the releases of jubilee.

--from *The Torah, A Women’s Commentary* (762-763)

The commandments of Shabbat, Shemittah, and Jubilee can be seen as a call for “radical...political, social, and economic change”. Our food is obtained through “war against the earth.” That is, until the Shemittah and Jubilee years. Actually observing these biblical mandates would mean that an average of two days each week would be “fallow” earth days, when one includes the seventh and fiftieth years. We are still able to eat what the earth bestows upon us, but we are not allowed to force the soil to constantly give us more. Without agricultural manipulation, the earth’s inhabitants would essentially become, once more, “gatherers.” And, according to Leviticus, if people fail to allow the planet its Shabbat, humans can expect that “the land shall become a desolation and your cities a ruin. Then shall the land make up for its sabbath years throughout the time it is desolate...then shall the land rest and make up for its sabbath years. Throughout the time that it is desolate, it shall observe the rest that it did not observe in your sabbath years while you were dwelling upon it.” (26:33-35) Our ancestors understood that the planet needs, indeed requires, rest; if it was not granted, it would be taken. The Torah foresaw not an economy of continuous growth (which is necessarily unsustainable), but one of constant cycling: expansion and contraction. The Jubilee allowed release: renewal for the earth, a clean slate for debtors, and a return of the land to its original owners. Two years of refraining from action against the earth would be quite an equalizer. “And the great sabbatical spiral renews human community as well. Here we see the Torah’s vision of social justice focus on resting, not only from the physical work of tilling the land but from the political and social work of building institutions and concentrating capital. Stop work for even just one day, and for that day hierarchy dissolves: no boss, no employee. Stop work for an entire year, and the institutions of society, normally so useful, periodically dissolve.” (Waskow *Torah of the Earth* “Earth, Social Justice, and Social Transformation” 73-81)

Shabbat--the Sabbath--is the great challenge of the Jewish people to technology run amok. It asserts that although work can be good, it becomes good only when crowned by rest, reflection, re-creation, and renewal. The Sabbaths of the seventh day, the seventh month, the seventh year, and in principle the seventh cycle (the Jubilee at the fiftieth year) give not only human beings but animals and even plants and minerals, the entire Earth, the right to rest. The modern age has been the greatest triumph of work, technology, in all of human history. This triumph deserves celebration. But instead of pausing to celebrate and reevaluate, we have become addicted to the work itself. For five hundred years, the human race has not made Shabbat, has not paused to reflect and reconsider, to take down this great painting from its easel and catch our breaths before putting up a new canvas to begin a new project.

Torah teaches that if we deny the Earth its Shabbats, the Earth will make Shabbat anyway--through desolation. The Earth *does* get to rest. Our only choice is whether the rest occurs with joy or with disaster.

The Earth and the human race are now faced with such a moment of Shabbat denied. Triumphant human technology, run amok without Shabbat, brings the danger of impending desolation.

--from “What is Eco-Kosher?” by Arthur Waskow, in *This Sacred Earth*, Gottlieb.

The laws regarding the sabbatical and jubilee years are not like others, such as [lekhet, shikchah, pe’ah or ma’aser ani], which is “an extension of privilege to the poor.” Rather, these years are an “equalization of all who live off the soil”--every living being, essentially. The Talmud indicates that landowners were required to dismantle their fences during the Shemittah year. “Clearly,

this dramatic line of action was not meant to guarantee the poor access to the fields, for access to the fields (or the fruit was guaranteed in either case. Rather, in destroying the fences one is pulling down the symbol and reality of private ownership. In the one case, one is entering another man's property and enjoying his generosity; in the other, this distinction has ceased to exist." (Yaffe "Man and Nature in the Sabbatical Year" Blidstein 137)

On the Sabbath, the traditionally observant Jew does more than rest, pray, and refrain from ordinary work. There are at least three other elements of Sabbath observance that are relevant to stewardship: we create nothing, we destroy nothing, and we enjoy the bounty of the earth. In this way the Sabbath becomes a celebration of our tenancy and stewardship in the world.

Nothing is created, and this reminds us of G-d's supremacy as Creator and our comparative inadequacy. Nothing is destroyed, and this reminds us that the creations of this world are not ours to ruin. We enjoy the bounty of the earth, and this reminds us that although our work, if properly done, will uncover for us far more of G-d's bounty than we would otherwise have enjoyed, nevertheless G-d, and not human invention, is still the ultimate source of that bounty...

For Jews, it is the awareness of the Sabbath during the working days that can bring the realm of time and its accompanying sense of restraint and limit to stewardship. It is the Sabbath that defines the relationship between steward and Ruler. It is the Sabbath, ultimately, that completes and confirms the environmental wisdom of Judaism.

--David Ehrenfeld and Philip Bentley, 1985, *Judaism* 34:310-311)

'Sabbath in our time! To cease for a whole day from all business, from all work, in the frenzied hurry-scurry of our time? To close the exchanges, the workshops and factories, to stop all railway services – great heavens! How would it be possible? The pulse of life would stop beating and the world perish!' The world perish? On the contrary – it would be saved.

--Samson Raphael Hirsch, 19th Century German Orthodox Rabbi, *Judaism Eternal* 2:30

To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day on which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction – a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence from external obligations – a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization, a day on which we use no money, a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow humans and the forces of nature – is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for humanity's progress than the Sabbath?

--Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1951, (adapted) *The Sabbath*, p. 28

During the sabbatical years, the earth rests, and social hierarchy between the rich and poor is eliminated. Indeed, the ultimate effect of observance of these Sacred Times is "a regimen in which man's [sic] technological and economic manipulation of the earth's products is restrained, if not eliminated." (140) Consider this as we remind ourselves through the blessing of Shehechyanu, of the sacredness within Jewish spirals of time.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיּוּמֵנוּ נִהְיָ יָעֻזְנוּ לָךְ מִן הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu v'ki'manu v'higi-anu laz'man hazeh.

Praised are You G-d, Creator of the universe, who has sustained us, maintained us, and enabled us to reach this moment in life.

בְּרַכַּת הַבָּנִים - Blessing of the Children

For Sons say:

יְשׁוּ מִךְ אֱלֹהִים פְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.

Yesimcha elohim k'efraim v'chimenashe.

May G-d make you as Ephraim and Manasseh.

For Daughters say:

יְשׁוּ מִךְ אֱלֹהִים פִּי שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה.

Yesimeich elohim k'sara, rivka, rachel v'leah.

May G-d make you as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah.

For Both Sons and Daughters:

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וַיִּשְׂמְרֶךָ.

יֵאָר יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יְךָ וַיַּחַנּוּ דְךָ.

יֵשׂא יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יְךָ, וַיִּשְׂמְרֶם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

Yevarech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha.

Yaeir Adonai panecha eilecha vichunecha.

Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem lecha shalom.

May G-d bless you and guard you.

May G-d turn G-d's face to you and be gracious to you.

May G-d watch over you and grant you and your children and your children's' children peace and blessing, for us and all humanity, for all time.

Mnemonic: קַדְשׁ וְרַחֲטֵז - KADDESH-URHATZ

Kadesh Urh^{at}z קַדְשׁ וְרַחֲטֵז.

Karpas Yah^{at}z כַּרְפָּס וַיַּחֲטֵז.

Magid Rahtza מַגִּיד רַחֲטָזָה.

Motzee Matzah מוֹצֵיא מַצָּה.

Maror Korekh מָרֹר כּוֹרֵךְ.

Shulhan Orekh שֻׁלְחַן עוֹרֵךְ.

Tzafun Barekh צַפּוּן בָּרַךְ.

Hallel Nirtzah הַלֵּל נִרְטָזָה.

Urchatz: To Cleanse

Sometimes, when we wash our hands, we do so to make them physically clean; other times, it is to render them spiritually pure. Hand hygiene, or the physical cleanliness of hands, is an important part of public health, and individuals are expected to act responsibly toward others by washing regularly in order to minimize the spread of pathogens like the flu virus. In this case, our society has recognized that an individual's right not to wash has expensive consequences in the health of the general population.

Hand cleanliness can be seen as a metaphor for the cleanliness of the environment; hand hygiene as pollution control. Indeed, when individuals (or corporations) don't see themselves as sharing responsibility for the environment (or full responsibility for their pollution), the general population ("the commons") suffers.

Before harmful materials like chemical or radioactive waste existed, the Jewish people respected the health of the planet and their neighbors by keeping dangerous goods out of the commons. The "laws of damages" apply to direct harm to people and property, as well as "use of the environment as a medium for damage to others." (Benstein 128) Judaism does not allow a polluter to gain profit at the cost of the general population through misuse of natural resources. Tasefta Bava Kamma states,

(2:6) Rabban Shimon Gamliel said: Anyone who causes any sort of damage or harm in the public domain, (his damaging goods) are permitted for all to take, on account of robbery.

(10:8) Whosoever robs the public must make restitution to the public. Robbing the public is a graver offense than robbing an individual, for one who robs an individual can appease that person and return what he stole, but one who robs the public cannot appease the public and return to all of them what was stolen from them.

That is, damaging the commons is considered robbery of the public, and is taken very seriously by the tradition. Bava Kama 30a of the Talmud teaches us that the Rabbis address the issue of the commons in regard to waste.

The Rabbis taught: The early pious ones (hasidim rishonim) would hide their thorns and broken glass three handbreadths deep in their fields, so they wouldn't hold up the plowing. Rav Sheshet would throw his in the fire, and Rava would throw his in the Euphrates River. Rav Yehudah said: "Whoever wants to be a pious person should observe the laws of damages (nezikin)."

Rabbi Akiva Wolff's article, "A Jewish Perspective on 'The Tragedy of the Commons'" in *Compendium of Sources in Halacha and the Environment*, explains:

The environment--our life support system--is also a commons, shared by all. From a narrow economic point of view, it makes sense for each individual, or corporation, to maximize his profit by exploiting the environment as much as possible, since the profits will be all his, and the costs, in terms of pollution and the exhaustion of resources, will have to be shared by everyone using the commons. When a large group of individuals act in this manner, the environment--and ultimately everyone--suffers...

Interestingly, the problem of the commons was described long ago in the Talmud (Baba Kamma 50b), as follows:

A pious man observed someone clearing stones from his own field and disposing of them on an adjacent public thoroughfare. "Why are you removing stones from a place that doesn't belong to you to a place that does belong to you?" the pious man asked. The incredulous offender scoffed at the strange comment. Some time later, the offender was forced to sell his field, and while traveling along the same thoroughfare, stumbled over the very stones he had disposed of there. The meaning

of the pious man's words finally dawned on him and he exclaimed, "That pious man spoke correctly when he asked, "Why are you removing stones from a place that doesn't belong to you to a place that does belong to you?"

The Talmud does something very interesting here - it reframes the problem. As a guide to moral action, the Talmud focuses on the responsibility of each individual making the moral decision whether to exploit the commons for his own profit and to the detriment of society, or not...The problem is one of properly understanding one's place in the broader scheme of things. The Creator runs the world. Our ownership or control of what we think is 'ours' is not absolute, nor is it permanent...The only resources that the individual has a permanent stake in are the public resources he shares with everyone else around him - these are the resources that must be protected for posterity. The focus of each individual, vis-a-vis the commons, is on obligations, not rights. When each individual focuses on his obligations - to his Creator, to his fellow man, and to his environment life-support system - then the commons are in good hands.

The Torah forbids causing damage to others or their property. The damager must cease his damaging activity and compensate for the damage he caused... Each of us must focus on his responsibility to others - regardless of what others are doing. An individual is not allowed to say, "Since I'm only one of many people contributing to the problem, I'm not responsible. After all, even without me, the damage would have occurred and if I was the only one doing the activity it wouldn't have been enough damage to have mattered." When each individual recognizes his true place in the world and assumes personal responsibility for his actions, there need never be another "Tragedy of the Commons." (34-35)

Thus, Jews are required to wash their hands, and to assume personal responsibility for issues such as pollution. After all, it is our actions as the earth's inhabitants that have caused the problem of pollution. As Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13 reminds us, G-d requires us to take care of the earth and to protect it, as if it is destroyed, there will be no one left to repair it.

This washing of the hands, unblest as it is, represents our historic treatment of the planet. In a moment, we will wash our hands with a blessing, symbolically committing ourselves to changing our behavior toward the earth, to treating it as our sacred life support system.

In traditional Jewish homes, it is common to ritually wash the hands (wash and recite a blessing) before eating bread. According to most traditions, no blessing is recited at this point in the Seder, though we wash our hands before eating the green vegetable.

Fruits or vegetables dipped in water can acquire ritual impurity (Lev. 11:34). Washing before eating vegetables which have come into contact with water is a hold-over from Talmudic times. In that period many Rabbis attempted to eat all their foods in a state of ritual purity – trying to experience in their daily eating the sense of sacredness associated with the Temple. To emphasize that this is only a pious custom, and not even a rabbinic requirement, no blessing is recited.

Except for the seder night the custom has fallen into general disuse, even among the strictly observant. But on seder night we wash at the beginning of the evening to create the spirit of a sacred gathering conducted in purity and devotion.

--from *A Different Night, the Family Participation Haggadah*, 1997. Noam Zion, p. 29.

When we wash in this case, we wash without blessing. What other unblessed actions do we take? If the idea behind eating dipped vegetables is to experience sacredness in the daily experience of eating, then blessed eating is thoughtful eating. Unblessed action, then, is thoughtless action.

I recently saw a new trash and recycling container. It was labeled with three compartments: plastic and aluminum recycling, fiber recycling, and "landfill." The labeling on the bins forced the person "trashing" something to think about what would happen after it was thrown "away." It made me, and others, consider my actions. Could the thing be recycled? Was there an alternative? Do you need such reminders throughout your day?

Our current world encourages unthinking action toward our planet. Most trash bins are not labeled "landfill," and recycle bins are few and far between. Deeper green thinking and action (the "reduce" and "reuse" portions of the slogan) are even less popular, although re-use behaviors such as carrying a durable water bottle have gained popularity in the last several years. This Passover, what unblessed behaviors would you like to change?

Kaddesh/Kiddush - קדש

[לשבת ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום הששי ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם: ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי,

[*Vay'hi erev vay'hi voker yom hashi-shi. Vay'chulu hashamayim v'ha-aretz v'chol- tzva-am. Vay'chal Elohim bayom hashvi-i, m'lachto asher asah, vayishbot bayom hashvi-i, mikol-mlachto asher asah. Vay'vareich Elohim, et-yom hashvi-i, vay'kadeish oto, ki vo shavat mikol-mlachto, asher-bara Elohim la-asot.*]

["And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. And, when the heavens and all their host were completed, when G-d completed on the seventh day all the work which G-d had made, G-d then imbued the seventh day with holiness because G-d ceased from all the divine creation which G-d had done."]

When Pesach begins on Shabbat, we read an additional text from one of the Genesis creation story. Our tradition includes two creation myths in the first few chapters of Parashat Bereishit, and another kabbalistic origin story. All these lend themselves to an ecological interpretation.

The first creation story in the Torah, found in Genesis 1:1-2:4a, begins and ends with the words, "heaven and earth." Humans, according to this story, bridge the two. The spiritual and material worlds are linked through human creatures, especially through their actions. Justice and ethics allow the Creation World to interact with the Divine, Heavenly World. In this version of our Origin Myth, men and women are created as one, reflecting our understanding and appreciation

of all people as created equal. The first humans are vegetarian, as they are given, by G-d, only plants to eat. However, these first human beings are allowed to roam all over the earth. There is no possibility of exile for this Adam and Eve; the entire planet is their homeland. The word “good” is repeated throughout the text at the end of each day of Creation. As G-d speaks each level of being into existence, the reader is reminded that all things have value, and this value is assigned by G-d prior to human existence. Human needs and desires are not the yardstick by which the natural world is measured. Every creeping thing is an end in itself. Human beings are the last of creation, not the purpose. In *Guide of the Perplexed*, Part III, Chapter 13, Maimonides reminds his reader that the “final end” of any particular species of animal or plant is derived “from an eternal necessity that has never ceased and will never cease,” that is, the divine. Plants and animals, nature, are of G-d just as human beings are of G-d, and have their own intrinsic worth. Maimonides castigates both science and philosophy for attempting to assign the natural world to a category of thing that has been created “for the sake of another.”

The whole of creation is deemed “very good.” This is significant because the Earth (at least, and perhaps the entire universe) can be thought of as a single organism. Each part depends upon the others, and breaking a single link can undermine the entire system. In current environmental thought, this is called the “Gaia concept.” In the passage, humans are said to have been created in the image of G-d; that is, “G-d now said, “Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness.” This part of Genesis 1:26 could be seen as problematic; after all, if humans are created in the image of G-d, are they not greater than and more important than all the rest of creation? The verse continues, “and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” Dominion, to our ears and to the writers, has a distinctly hierarchical feeling. Doesn’t the story continue with G-d commanding humans to “be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and tame it”? If G-d is creating humans only in G-d’s own image, why then the words “us” and “our” in the verse? Perhaps humans are made in the image of all that lives and exists. Perhaps G-d was consulting with creation when G-d created the human being. Further, the two commandments, called blessings in the text, hold more depth than one might first imagine. They are commandments to life and living; after all, what do humans do? They make relationships with one another, sometimes creating families, and they also work to “earn a living.” These two commandments, “fill the earth” and “tame it” can be considered commandments to love and make connections with other humans, as well as to find work and bring food from the earth. These two can also be considered the two halves of human nature. Our similarity to the divine is reflected in our love for others; our animal nature is exemplified in our need for physical activity and work. Finally, the verse also emphasizes that the Earth ultimately belongs to G-d. G-d has created this masterpiece; G-d loans it to humans for their supervision. Finally, it is impossible to truly understand Genesis/Creation without the context of Deuteronomy; dominion has no place outside the “promised land.” The promised land, Israel, was a gift from G-d, and was to be treated as such a gift. This is what is meant by “dominion.”

Midrash on this creation myth in *Ecclesiastes Rabbah*, 7:13, states: When G-d created the first man, G-d showed him all the trees in the Garden of Eden and said, ‘See how beautiful and perfect are My creations! All that I have created, I created for you. Therefore, be mindful so that you do not abuse or destroy My world. For if you abuse or destroy it, there is no one to repair it after you.’

The second creation myth, found in Genesis 2:4b-2:25, tells a different tale. In this story, there is a single day of creation. Before even plants or rain existed, G-d created human beings of “dust from the soil.” Human existence, then, is based in the earth, as humans are made from the earth itself. This is reflected in the Hebrew roots for Earth and the name of the first human, Adam. Earth is “Adamah” in Hebrew; thus, the first human’s name (literally, Earthling) reflects his origin. This might lead the reader to believe all the rest of creation was made for humans, but after G-d breathes the breath of life into the first person, G-d planted a garden for humans “to work and keep,” as caretakers. This example of humans as working for G-d in order to take care of G-d’s creation is an effective one; after all, if the Earth belongs to G-d and we are simply the gardeners, how can we mistreat the Garden? Furthermore, if human ego is overblown because we consider ourselves created “in the image of G-d,” it might help to remind ourselves that the second half of Genesis creation myths has us made from dirt. Even more so, we are simply keepers of the garden, not its creator or owner. Humans are once again the connection between G-d and the Earth in this myth. The connection this time is stewardship.

Human connection to the land is first emphasized in these myths, especially the second. Can the Garden, or the entire Earth, be thought of as the Promised Land? After all, in both stories, humans are to look over the land. Before the Jews had a covenant with the land of Israel, all humans had a covenant with the planet.

In the third, Kabbalistic creation myth, G-d creates existence first by creating space, then by allowing G-d’s ultimate light to enter all the worlds. The Infinite shattered at the moment of creation, and the “vessels” of G-d’s emanation broke, sending holy sparks showering into the spiritual and material worlds. This myth is the one from which we gain the concept of Tikkun Olam, “repair of the world.” The earth is broken and needs improvement. It is the responsibility of the human community to bring the sparks of divine wholeness back together to create a perfected world, Shalom.

Judaism is uniquely poised to address the ecological crisis, thanks to this bit of Kabbalah, because the tradition has a built-in framework for a world in crisis. Both Judaism and the environmental movement focus on the creation of a better world in the here and now. Jews does not focus on “the world to come,” or what happens after death; instead, its followers hope to improve what we know and where we live.

In an attempt to explicate how the world could come into being if G-d originally filled all space, [Isaac] Luria taught that G-d had withdrawn into himself, so to speak, thereby creating an "empty space." This divine act of self-withdrawal, known in Hebrew as *tsimtsum*, made possible the existence of something other than G-d. The second part of the cosmic process, called the "breaking of the vessels" (*shevirat ha-kelim*), concerns the emanation or reemergence of divinity back into the primordial space produced by *tsimtsum*. During this process of emanation, some of the "vessels" containing the light of G-d were shattered. While most of the light succeeded in reascending to its divine source, the remainder fell and became attached to the now-broken "vessels" below. The result of this chaotic and catastrophic dispersal of divine light was the imprisonment of holy sparks in the lower world, the realm of material reality.

Since these sparks of divine light seek to be liberated and returned to their source, the human task, according to Isaac Luria, is to bring about such liberation through proper devotional means. Known as *tikkun*, the "mending" or "restitution" of the life of G-d, this effort is, at its core, a contemplative one. Every religious action requires contemplative concentration in order to "raise up the fallen sparks." The successful struggle on the part of the community will result in the final separation of holiness from materiality, and a return of all divine light to the state of primordial unity that preceded the creation of the world.

Fine, Lawrence. "Luria, Isaac." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 8. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. pp. 5532-5533.

Lawrence Kushner's interpretation, "Repairing the World" in *The Book of Miracles*:

In sixteenth-century Tsefat, Rabbi Isaac Luria observed that in his world, like ours, many things seemed to be wrong. People suffered from hunger, disease, hatred, and war. "How could G-d allow such terrible things to happen?" wondered Luria. "Perhaps," he suggested, "it is because G-d needs our help." He explained his answer with a mystical story.

When first setting out to make the world, G-d planned to pour a Holy Light into everything in order to make it real. G-d prepared vessels to contain the Holy Light. But something went wrong. The light was so bright that the vessels burst, shattering into millions of broken pieces like dishes dropped on the floor. The Hebrew phrase which Luria used for this "breaking of the vessels" is *sh'virat ha-kaylim*.

Our world is a mess because it is filled with broken fragments. When people fight and hurt one another, they allow the world to remain shattered. The same can be said of people who have pantries filled with food and let others starve. According to Luria, we live in a cosmic heap of broken pieces, and G-d cannot repair it alone.

That is why G-d created us and gave us freedom of choice. We are free to do whatever we please with our world. We can allow things to remain broken or, as Luria urged, we can try to repair the mess. Luria's Hebrew phrase for "repairing the world" is *tikkun olam*.

As Jews, our most important task in life is to find what is broken in our world and repair it. The commandments in the Torah instruct us, not only on how to live as Jews, but on how to mend creation.

According to the Baal Shem Tov, "In all that is in the world dwell Holy Sparks, no thing is empty of them; in the actions of men also, indeed even in the sins he does, dwell Holy Sparks of G-d." (From The Baal Shem Tov's *Instruction in Intercourse with G-d*, translated by Martin Buber (English transl. by Maurice Friedman) in Buber's *Hasidism and Modern Man*, p. 189) Thus, Judaism is about *doing*, not about what one believes, and halachah (usually translated "law") can also be understood as "the path." Judaism is a practice; Jews are Jews because of their behaviors and actions. Thus, the Jewish response to the environmental crisis has been a call to action. The primary Jewish value of free will allows that humans make choices, and can change their behaviors. If we hope to fulfill the commandment to "keep" the garden, we must choose to change our lifestyles and take political action.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בְּחַר בְּנוּ מִכָּל-לֵעָם, וְרוּמְמָנוּ מִכָּל-לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְתַתְּנוּ-לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה [שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמִנְחָה וְ] מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזִמְנֵי יָם לְשׁוֹן אֶת-יּוֹם [הַשְּׁבֻת הַזֶּה וְ] אֶת-יּוֹם [חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. זְמַן חֲרוּתְנוּ, [בְּאַתְּבָה], מְקָרָא ק' דָּשׁ, זְכָר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. פִּי בְנוּ בְחֻרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁנוּ מִכָּל-

הַעַמִּים. [וְשְׁבֻת] וּמוֹעֲדֵי קִדְּשֶׁךָ [בְּאַתְּבָה וְבִרְצוֹן] בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הַנְּחִלְתָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מְקַדֵּשׁ [הַשְּׁבֻת וְ] יֵשׁ רָאֵל וְהַזְמַנִּים יָם:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher bachar banu mikol-am, v'rom'manu mikol-lashon, v'kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, vatiten-lanu Adonai Eloheinu b'ahavah [shabbatot limnuchah u] moadim l'simchah, chagim uz'manim l'sason et-yom [hashabat hazeh v'et-yom] chag hamatzot hazeh. Z'man cheiruteinu, [b'ahavah,] mikra kodesh, zeicher litzi-at mitzrayim. Ki vanu vacharta v'otanu kidashta mikol-ha-amim. [v'shabat] umo'adei kod'shecha [b'ahavah uv'ratzon] b'simchah uv'sason hinchaltanu. Baruch atah Adonai, m'kadeish [hashabat v'] yisra-eil v'hazmanim.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the Universe, with whom we have a unique relationship, lifting us who know the language of creation above those who speak an ordinary language, enabling us to encounter holiness through your mitzvot, giving us lovingly [Shabbat for rest,] holidays for joy, festivals and special times for celebration, particularly this [Shabbat and this] Passover, this time of freedom, [given in love,] this sacred gathering, this re-enactment of our going out from Mitzrayim. It is you who has chosen us, you who have shared your holiness with us in a manner different than with other peoples. For with [Shabbat and] festive revelations of your holiness, happiness and joy you have granted us [lovingly and willingly]. Praised are you, G-d, who imbues with holiness [Shabbat], Israel and the sacred moments of the year.

On Saturday evening, we incorporate the following Havdalah section into the Kiddush.

[בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאִירֵי הָאֵשׁ:]

[*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei m'orei ha-eish.*]

[Praised are You G-d, Creator of the Universe, who created the lights of fire.]

[ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, המבדיל בין קדש לחל בין אור לחשך, בין ישראל לעמים, בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה. בין קדשת שבת לקדשת יום טוב הבדלת. ואת-יום השביעי מששת ימי המעשה קדשת. הבדלת וקדשת את-עמך ישראל בקדשתך. ברוך אתה יי, המבדיל בין קדש לקדש:]

[*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol bein or l'choshech, bein yisra-eil la-amim, bein yom hashvi-i l'sheishet y'mei hama-aseh. Bein k'dushat shabbat likdushat yom tov hivdalta. V'et-yom hashvi-i misheishet y'mei hama-aseh kidashta. Hivdalta v'kidashta et-am'cha yisra-eil bikdushatecha. Baruch atah Adonai, hamavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh.*]

[Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the Universe, who distinguishes between the holy and profane, light and darkness, Israel and the people, Shabbat and the six weekdays, the holiness of Shabbat and the holiness of a Festival. You have imbued the Shabbat with greater holiness than the six weekdays and You have granted of Your holiness into Your people Israel. Praised are you, G-d, who distinguishes between degrees of sanctity.]

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, שֶׁהִחַיְנוּ וְקִיּוּמֵנוּ נִהְיָ יָעֲנוּ לָךְ מִן הַיּוֹם:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu v'ki'manu v'higi-anu laz'man hazeh.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the Universe, who has sustained us, maintained us, and enabled us to reach this moment in life.

כַּרְפַּס - ס

Karpas, any vegetable that is not bitter, is dipped in salt water before it is eaten for the seder. Two traditional choices are parsley and potato. The green vegetable is a symbol of renewal and rebirth of the earth in spring; the salt water into which it is dipped is symbolic of the bitter tears of the Israelite slaves. This appetizer is a reminder that growth and life are possible (or inevitable), even (or especially) during times of grief and death. It is also a reminder that we are from the earth, part of it, dependent upon it. The environmental lesson, then, is that when we impoverish our environment, we impoverish ourselves. By dipping the green vegetable (“from the earth”) of renewal and springtime into the salt water (of our bitter tears), we accept that we are part of the problem, and we acknowledge our part in harming the planet. When we consume the green vegetable, we renew our commitment to protecting the environment and ourselves.

Spring is the Renaissance, the rebirth of life, after a winter of discontent:
For now the winter is past, The rains are over and gone. The blossoms have
appeared in the land.... Arise, my darling, My fair one, come away! (*Song of
Songs 2:11-13*)

On the national level the Jewish people lay dormant in Egyptian slavery until G-d awakened their desire for freedom and led them out in the springtime. On the individual level liberation is often experienced as a gift of new options, a sudden expansion of possibilities. However, the fresh taste of new-found freedom

symbolized by Karpas is still mingled with memories of bitterness, the salt water of tears.

--from *A Different Night, the Family Participation Haggadah*, 1997. Noam Zion, p. 29

In ancient times our people were farmers and shepherds. In this festive season, we are meant to feel a connection with the food we eat from the land and to remember that we are surrounded by blessings and miracles no less majestic than those our ancestors witnessed thousands of years ago. Spring reminds us that we are again given a chance for renewal; a new chance to create peace and goodness in our world.

--from *Telling the Story*, Barry Louis Polisar (2007), p. 10

As we see the earth return to life in spring after the death-like sleep of winter, we feel our senses awaken. Our energy returns, our skins crave the kiss of the sun. Annually, we return to a sense of wonder regarding the natural world. Color springs back into our gray worlds, and we are reminded with each warm breeze that life turns in cycles. When you experience this awakening this spring, how will you honor it? How can we witness the incredible renewing power of nature without also feeling indicted in regard to our pollution and toxifying of the earth? This year, as your attention returns to the physical environment, allow this feeling to alter your behavior, and commit yourself to protecting the planet from eco-destruction. The earth knows what it needs to flourish: respect that wisdom. In your community, your family, and your body, respect the needs of the natural.

Just as Passover is about renewal and rebirth, so the Exodus story itself is about the birth of the Jewish people. Slavery and the plagues were the difficult labor and birth pains, and the parting of the Reed Sea, the journey through the birth canal.

Our liberation comes from inside
From Tehom the motherdeep, the birthplace inside each of us
From twisted stomachs
From holding it in and making it tight:
Tight womb, tight vagina, tight mouth pressed in upon itself.
Our liberation has been a slow birth over centuries.
Avadim hayinu, we have been slaves
To words, to prayers, to rituals that do not come from inside,
From Mitzrayim, from the desperate push to be whole women,
Whole human beings.
Our liberation will need the old ways of listening to our bodies
To hear the rhythms of the universe reflected therein:
The ocean waves coming close and going away,
The moon herself filling up and emptying out,
The breath gaining and sighing,
The womb blood surging and gushing out,
The womb herself lying fallow for a time and fertile for a time ;

Our liberation.

Can you feel how it will be to hear through this inner ear again?

To stop being afraid to be women

Who give birth in the fields,
Who suckle and nurture ideas as we nurture and suckle children,
Who feed ourselves and others from kitchens that are cornucopias,
Who pray like Hannah and Sarah and Even and our great-grandmothers
And grandmothers who drew from the Well and always found water,
Who pass on wisdom as our mothers passed to us in their milk
The pain-and-joy puzzle in being women.

Our liberation will not be our liberation until we share it,
Teach it, feed it, drink it, sing it with the others.
A diamond cannot show all its facets until another diamond grinds it.
This is certain: the soft-strong humming waters of mikveh
In which we bathe each month
Ache to be born in all of humankind.
(by Penina Adelman)

One Hebrew name for Passover is Chag ha-Aviv, which means "the spring festival." As with most holidays, the origins of Passover are found in agriculture and in the natural change of seasons. Pesach is the reason the Jewish calendar has leap months; it must be in the spring.

The Jewish calendar normally consists of twelve lunar months. A lunar month -- from the moment when the crescent new-moon appears until it disappears once again -- is roughly 29.5 days. Twelve lunar months equal 354 days; eleven days less than the solar year. Therefore, if we were to maintain a strictly twelve-month lunar calendar, we would lose eleven days each year. This would result in holidays which would constantly be fluctuating in relation to the seasons, which are dictated by the solar cycle. We would have summer Chanukahs and snowy Shavuots.

Therefore the Torah commands us,¹ "Guard the month of spring, and make [then] the Passover offering." this is a directive to the Sanhedrin (Rabbinic Supreme Court) to constantly adjust the calendar to ensure that Nissan, the month of the holiday of Passover, always falls during the spring season. This is accomplished through thirteen-month "leap years" which were added to the calendar approximately once every three years. During these years, a second month of Adar was added to the calendar...

However, it wasn't enough for Passover to fall after the equinox, when it was "officially" spring; spring-like conditions needed to be evidenced. If in the land of Israel the barley² had not yet ripened, and the trees were not yet blossoming with seasonal fruit -- that, too, was sufficient reason to delay Nissan through adding a second month of Adar. Spring should be felt; it should be bright and green.

1. Deuteronomy 16:1.

2. The barley was needed for the *Omer* sacrifice which was offered on the 2nd day of Passover.

--by Rabbi Menachem Posner, "How does the spring equinox relate to the timing of Passover?" posted on chabad.org

One easy way to gain connection to the earth is to grow one's own food. This practice does not require a full garden, or even a patch of land; it can be done on a windowsill and could involve a single pot of herbs to flavor your cooking. The Jewish calendar offers us a special opportunity to create this connection to the natural world, starting in very early spring, with the holiday of Tu B'shevat, the New Year of the Trees. One Tu B'shevat custom is to plant parsley seeds after the seder. If tended with care, the seeds will sprout and be ready to serve as karpas for your Passover seder plate.

Growing one's own food provides a practical and direct way to connect with the natural world. The practice seems to nurture spirituality and gratitude, as the activities of gardening naturally summon appreciation for nature as well as awe for the miracle of the change from seed to plant and the cycles of life through seedling and fruit.

Understanding the awesome power of the seed—its literal and symbolic promise of renewal—changed both how human beings lived on the face of the earth and their spiritual understanding. Sowing the seed permitted them to settle, farm, and claim land as their own. This knowledge altered for many—though not all at once—what had always been the rhythm of human life, shaped by the constant search for new sources of forage and food. The symbolic meaning of the seed—the ever-renewing cycle of nature—changed the human spiritual vision of the cycle of life and death as it affected each individual. From the Neolithic onward, seasonal renewal—the reseeded of earth—became a potent metaphor for human resurrection, reflected in the much later custom of the ancient Greeks, who kept a pot of seeds representing the household's dead near the hearth.

The cycle of nature—the progress from seed to fruition to dying-off and then renewal in the spring—was mirrored in the wild fields and the cultivated garden alike, while the fragility of harvest—the possible interruption of the cycle by drought, wind, or other natural calamities—established the pattern of how humans understood the workings of the cosmos. The oldest of surviving sacred stories have their roots in the garden and reflect how humanity sought to understand the changeable patterns of their world and, at the same time, to imagine a world no longer subject to change. It's no accident that our own word "paradise" comes from a Persian word for an enclosed garden.... Rediscovering "gardening as an instrument of grace," to use May Sarton's words, requires that we go back in time to recover our sense of wonder. Much separates us from those who discovered the power of the seed but now, thousands of years later at the dawn of a new millennium, more and more of us are experiencing the sense of spirit our ancestors on the planet acknowledged in the soil beneath their feet and in the seed itself. Gardening engages all five of the human senses as few activities do. We see, smell, feel, hear, and even taste as we garden, and, because all of our senses are involved, what we experience is vivid and specific. The simple acts of gardening—digging, tamping, working the dirt, and watering—have echoes that reach back to childhood, whether we played in the suburbs or in a city park. As we garden we experience time past and present. Touching the earth—digging, planting, harvesting—connects us literally and spiritually to all those who have dug, planted, and harvested before us. Working in the garden permits us to

begin to understand the woven pattern of relationships in nature, and teaches us that nothing in nature is either independent or isolated.

When we garden we reconnect ourselves to the slow rhythms of the cosmos. Our knees in the dirt, our faces close to the ground, we dig in the soil and see the myriad forms of life hidden to us when we are upright and walking: the earthworm tunneling through the soil, the outlined whiteness of the grub, the sticky trail of the slug. The perfumes of the garden—the rich loamy smell of water-laden soil or the acrid bite of the geranium—revive us and remind us that the world has a palette of scent as well as color. The sweetness of a berry and the cool note of mint encompass a range of taste and feeling, and teach a lesson in opposites. We breathe deep as our fingers work the soil, and marvel at the texture of the visible world: the soft fuzz of a begonia's leaf, the pansy's fragile velvet, the feathery lightness of dill. And then there is the music of a garden, set apart from the noise-filled world in which we usually live: the evening call of the summer cicada or the whisper of grasses, the crackle of fallen leaves underfoot.

Gardening also helps us come to terms with the cycle of human life. Many of us tend to see our lives as linear, moving from points A to B in progression, with birth and death at opposite ends of the continuum, but the garden teaches another lesson entirely. In nature, beginnings and endings, birth and death, are inseparable: implicit in the flower's blooming is its dying-off as well as its eventual renewal. The perennials in our winter garden—dead aboveground, still awake below—teach us about time and hidden mysteries. The withered annual is a symbol of the larger pattern that extends beyond us and our gardens: Seeds borne by the wind and birds bring small pieces of our lives into other places and other lives, making new, if unseen, connections. Planting seeds makes us active participants in the cycle of life, while tending our gardens teaches us about larger patterns of the cycle that are beyond our control. We learn patience from the long wait from planting to sprouting to blooming, as we learn acceptance when nature takes its own course. We gain humility when we catch a true glimpse of the extraordinary complexity of the natural world.

--from "Gardening as a Spiritual Tool," in *Spiritual Gardening* by Peg Streep; 1999

The blessing for karpas is the traditional blessing for all vegetables. The English translation of "p'ri ha-adamah" praises G-d for creating the "fruits of the earth." This is especially meaningful for an environmentally-themed Passover seder. After all, what *isn't* the fruit of the Earth? Don't we depend upon our planet for every physical need?

There are several options of vegetables to use for karpas. Two very popular options are potatoes and parsley. I find these two the most fitting for the blessing. According to tradition, potatoes are often used because they are one of the few "green" vegetables that were available during Passover in eastern Europe. Potatoes are among the few vegetables that really evoke a sense of the earth itself, as they grow within it, must be dug out of it, and are covered in it even when they arrive at the local market.

Parsley, leafy and bright in the grocery store, is often not much more than a sprout when planted at home on Tu B'shevat for use during the seder. Therefore, it too, is evocative of the renewal of spring, as well as the miracle that is "bringing fruit from the earth." When the plant you're consuming has only recently sprouted from its dirt home, it is difficult *not* to remember that everything we eat--indeed, everything we consume and even everything we are--is ultimately from the earth.

Karpas is, finally, also about a return to simplicity (much like matzoh).

Seder participants take a small morsel of an ordinary vegetable, dip it in salt water, and recite a blessing of thanks. Each of these elements (that which grows from the earth, and the salt water representing the oceans of this planet) embrace the fundamental totality of all life. Taking these items together and praising the Source of these essentials of life bring to our attention the wonder of the ordinary. The obvious becomes mystery, activating a heightened sensitivity to the simplicity inherent in everything. Our generation is a complex one. Technology's intention to simplify has paradoxically, in fact, only made life more intricate, even confusing. Karpas and salt water return us to our beginnings, to the basics of human existence. Simple food, simple drink, simple taste. "The ordinariness of spiritual life comes from a heart that has learned to trust, from a gratefulness for the gift of human life... like water which finds its way between the stones or wears them away a little at a time and gradually lowers itself to the ocean, this ordinariness brings us to rest." (A Path With Heart) Salt water has been seen as the tears of suffering and sorrow. Amidst the sadness of life however, the gift of the simple and ordinary grants us comfort and hope. Salt water incubates lifelessness. The green vegetable graces our palates with the prospect of renewal and aliveness. "Simple in actions and in thoughts, you return to the source of being." (The Wisdom the Tao te Ching) The simple, ordinary act of karpas in salt water speaks volumes of the power of life to conquer death. Passover, after all, celebrates the process of redemption from the salty tears of slavery to the refreshing flowering of freedom, from the confusion of complexity to the clarity of the simple and ordinary.
--from the blog, *The Grateful Rabbi*, posted April 1, 2008

Karpas, by Ronnie M. Horn

Long before the struggle upward begins, there is tremor in the seed. Self-protection cracks, Roots reach down and grab hold. The seed swells, and tender shoots push up toward light. This is karpas: spring awakening growth. A force so tough it can break stone.

And why do we dip karpas into salt water?

To remember the sweat and tears of our ancestors in bondage.

To taste the bitter tears of our earth, unable to fully renew itself this spring because of our waste, neglect and greed.

To feel the sting of society's refusal to celebrate the blossoming of women's bodies and the full range of our capacity for love.

And why should salt water be touched by karpas?

To remind us that tears stop. Even after pain. Spring comes. And with it the potential for change.

Feminine:

בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה.

B'rucha at yah eloheinu ruach ha'olam boreit p'ri ha'adama.

Masculine:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה.

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha'adama.

You are Blessed, Our G-d, Spirit of the World, who creates the fruit of the earth.

--from *The Journey Continues: The Ma'yan Passover Haggadah* (Ma'yan,2000).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-adamah.

Praised are you, G-d, whose Presence fills the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

If the Earth Could Speak, It Would Speak with Passion.

As you dip the beauty of greens into the water of tears, please hear my cry. Can't you see that I am slowly dying? My forests are being clear cut, diminished. My diverse and wondrous creatures -- birds of the sky and beasts of the fields -- small and large are threatened with extinction in your lifetimes. My splendid, colorful flora and fauna are diminishing in kind. My tropical places are disappearing before us, and my oceans are warming. Don't you see that my climate is changing, bringing floods and heat, more extreme cycles of cold and warm, all affecting you and all our Creation? It doesn't have to be! You, all of you, can make a difference in simple ways. You, all of you, can help reverse this sorrowful trend.

May these waters into which you dip the greens become healing waters to sooth and restore. As you dip, quietly make this promise:

Yes, I can help protect our wondrous natural places. Yes, I can try to use fewer of our precious resources and to replant and sustain more. I can do my part to protect our forests, our oceans and waters. I can work to protect the survival of creatures of all kinds. Yes, I will seek new forms of sustainable energy in my home and in my work, turning toward the sun, the wind, the waters. I make this promise to strive to live gently upon this Earth of ours for the good of all coming generations.

--from "Dipping Parsley into Waters of Tears: The Earth Cries Out to Us," By Rabbi Warren Stone, Washington, D.C.

Yahatz/Divide - יָחַץ

Yachatz is the division of the middle matzoh and is given no blessing. The larger section of the broken matzoh is wrapped and reserved—the afikomen. Arthur Waskow's *New Freedom Seder*

asks: "Why do we break this bread in two? Because if we hold on to the whole loaf for ourselves, it remains the bread of oppression. If we break it in order to share it, it becomes the bread of freedom. In the world today, there are still some who are so pressed-down that they have not even this bread of oppression to eat. There are so many who are hungry that they cannot all come and eat with us tonight."

The Velveteen Rabbi's *Haggadah for Pesach* treats *yachatz* as an imperative: Separate dessert from need. This has relevance for environmentalism through the concept of thoughtful consumption: need and luxury. In a typical meal, the main course is what is needed; it provides vitamins and nutrients, and fills our hunger. Dessert, on the other hand, is something extra, something sweet, something not necessary.

What is overconsumption? When we talk about separating dessert from need in an environmental context, we must necessarily discuss consumption. There is a concept of consumption as out-of-control consumer luxury spending. The economic crisis, it is said, lies on the designer clothing-wearing, McMansion-living, Hummer-driving, credit card debt-accruing segment of our population. The truth is, however, that the average American household has a greater percentage of their income tied up in "the basics" than a generation ago, with 75% of income going to housing, transportation, health insurance, and taxes (compared to 54% in the 1970s).

Middle class Americans spend less on food (including restaurant meals), clothing, appliances, home furnishings, and cars than they did thirty years ago, adjusted for inflation. Conversely, they are spending more on home ownership (without a corresponding increase in home size), taxes, childcare, and a second car (which allows the lower-earning partner transportation to *her* place of employment).

--Elizabeth Warren & Amelia Warren Tyagi, "What's Hurting the Middle Class," *Boston Review*, September/October 2005

Now, if consumption levels have not changed in a generation, and in fact have decreased for many categories, it does not necessarily mean that Americans do not over-consume. Rather, it means that overconsumption is not a new phenomenon based in what we see as "luxury spending," and that the face of overconsumption looks much different than we would like to imagine.

The data in Warren and Tyagi's article indicates that if one wishes to live a "regular" life (i.e. the American dream), and own a home, raise a family, and pursue a career, our society does not provide the support to allow that to happen in a minimal-consumption way. At least, if one wishes to minimize consumption, that life will look very different from the typical, middle-class, average, "normal," American. After all, few families are willing to sacrifice their children's educations by buying a more affordable home in a less-attractive school district, even if it happens to be closer to the place of employment. Owning a single car would mean, for many families, that one of the partners would have little or no reliable transportation to the job site. Giving up childcare would mean the lower-earning partner would be required to give up full-time employment (which many simply cannot afford), and would most often require the female partner to give up her career, becoming dependent upon the male partner for money, health insurance, and retirement savings. This is, of course, a heteronormative view; gay and lesbian families have an even harder time, as they are often unable able to claim each other's health

benefits, and derive no tax savings by coupled living, as they are unable to file jointly in most states.

Indeed, if we desire a normalization of the minimization of consumption, change on a high level will be required. The vulnerabilities in middle-class living are credit (consumer and mortgage), public education (including preschool and college), healthcare, and savings. Furthermore, a normalization of part-time work is essential. Until these essential changes are made, what can be done? Hard choices are in order.

1. Walk, bike, and take public transportation before any other means of transport. Choose to live close to work and school. Buy a used car if necessary.
2. Rent or buy a small home. Share bedrooms. Smaller living space means being together more, and smaller storage spaces mean there is no room for thirty pairs of shoes or power tools that are never used.
3. Cook at home, and pack a lunch. Eat simply, low on the food chain, and close to home. If possible, buy a small refrigerator and shop for fresh ingredients more often.
4. Fly as little as possible.
5. Make rewards and gifts experiential, rather than material, as often as possible.
6. Think critically about your healthcare decisions and expectations, before faced with the issue.
7. What about overpopulation? Consider alternative means of establishing a family, and remember that each additional child brought into the world exponentially increases the consumption for which one is responsible.

Yachatz: Some do not get the chance to rise...

By Tamara Cohen

Some do not get the chance to rise and spread out like golden loaves of challah, filled with sweet raisins and crowned with shiny braids.

Rushed, neglected, not kneaded by caring hands, we grow up afraid that any touch might cause a break. There are some ingredients we never receive.

Tonight, let us bless our cracked surfaces and sharp edges, unafraid to see our brittleness and brave enough to see our beauty.

Reaching for wholeness, let us piece together the parts of ourselves we have found and honor all that is still hidden.

--from *The Journey Continues: The Ma'yan Passover Haggadah* (Ma'yan, 2000)

A ritual for the breaking of the matzoh, which traditionally has no brachah. The breaking of the matzoh is described in this ritual as “a silent, reflective act,” and ends with a reference to future generations. May many of our decisions in the coming year be reflective, and made with our children’s children in mind.

Leader: No prayer is recited before we break the middle matzoh on our Seder plate. This is a silent, reflective act.

Reader: For we recognize that, like the broken matzoh, we are incomplete, with prayers yet to be fulfilled, promises still to be redeemed.

We hide part of this broken matzoh and hope it will be found by the end our Seder meal.

For we recognize that parts of ourselves are yet unknown. We are still discovering what makes us whole.

We hide the larger of the two parts of the matzoh.

For we recognize that more is hidden than revealed.

Group: With the generations that have come before us, and with one another, our search begins.

From *Miriam's Tapestry: Passover Seder Haggadah*, compiled by Shari Lash and Nonni Keynes. A Project of Tapestry, Calgary, Alberta, 1995.

Next, a reading that invites us to think about matzoh as the bread of redemption, as well as the bread of affliction and poverty. How can food redeem us? Passover, which has so many names, is often called "Chag Hamatzah," or the festival of matzoh. The simplest food, matzoh, teaches us many lessons on health and generosity.

The Torah (Deuteronomy 16:3) calls Matzah "Lechem Oni", which is commonly translated as "Bread of Affliction", but means, more literally, "poor person's bread" or "peasant bread." For our ancestors, bread was the staff of life, symbolic of all food. One name for Passover is "The Festival of Matzah", but it might also be called "The Festival of Simple Food". Part of the great genius of this holiday is the way in which the simple peasant food of our slave past was transformed into the food of our redemption. How might Matzah as simple food redeem us now?

One way is our own personal health. Many of the serious diseases in our society have now been linked to over consumption of animal foods and processed foods of all sorts. In the past decade, medical authorities have begun to recommend less animal food and more whole grains and fresh vegetables.

A second way is by sharing food with the hungry. What do Matzah/simple food and hunger have to do with one another? If we all ate more simply, there would be more for others. This is an important lesson for the modern world and especially for us in America. More than 70% of the grain grown in the US goes to feed livestock. The livestock flesh, in turn, will feed far fewer people than the feed that went into it. If all the grain grown for livestock were consumed directly by people, it would feed five times as many people as it does when fed to animals.

A third way is that eating simple, fresh food grown by local farmers who practice sustainable farming methods reduces pollution for fertilizers and pesticides which threaten the health of humans, other species, and whole ecosystems.

Is this not the fast that I have chosen? To loose the chains of wickedness, to undo the bonds of oppression, and to let the oppressed go free...Is it not to share thy bread with the hungry? (Isaiah 58:6-7)

This is the Lechem Oni, Simple Bread, that our ancestors ate when they were slaves in Mitzrayim. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need celebrate Pesach with us. This year, we are still alienated from the land

and its living communities. Next year may we be more connected to our people's homeland, Israel, and to the natural world that is homeland to us all. This year, we are still slaves, tied to materialistic and destructive consumption patterns. Next year, may we and all the peoples of the earth be redeemed by having enough to satisfy our needs without consuming beyond what the earth can sustain.

--from "Preparing for Passover: Readings for the Seder Table," by Stewart Vile Tahl, in *Operation Noah: Defending G-d's Endangered Creatures*

We break the matzoh as we broke the chains of slavery, and as we break chains which bind us today. We will no more be fooled by movements which free only some of us, in which our so-called "freedom" rests upon the enslavement or embitterment of others.

(Adapted from the Passover Hagada Toolkit Version 1.0. courtesy of Ari Davidow, ari@ivritype.com)

--from The Velveteen Rabbi's *Haggadah for Pesach*, by Rachel Barenblat; 2008.

Magid/Narrate - מַגִּיד

הָא לַחְמָא אַנְיָא - Ha Lachma Anya

Ha Lachma Anya is the traditional invitation for all to join the meal. Some families open the door at this time, as a sign of welcome to guests. At this point in the seder, it is stated, "Let all who are hungry, come and eat." According to halachah, this supplication must be made in the native language of the country in which the seder takes place, ensuring that the hungry will be able to understand and take advantage of the invitation! Do we really invite the hungry to our seder table? Let Pesach become a time when we think about others more than ourselves, leaving behind the ego of chametz and selfishness, and opening ourselves to ego-less matzoh and tzedakah. Fill the shelves of the local food pantries, so that all who are hungry truly may eat.

How is hunger related to the environment?

Climate change's effect on agricultural production is of utmost concern. A number of factors determine crop yields, primarily temperature and precipitation. Although in some regions temperature and precipitation changes will have limited production benefits, agricultural experts agree that in general a changing climate will result in overall lower agriculture yields.^{4,5} When crops are exposed to high temperatures, crop development slows. In the U.S., studies predict that a 1.2 C increase from the current mean (which is what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts will occur over the next three decades) would cause yield decreases of 4 percent in corn, 6.7 percent in wheat, 12 percent in rice and 5.7 percent in cotton.^{6,7} Soybeans have a higher optimum temperature range, which means that Midwest soybean yields could possibly increase, but decline in the southern United States.

Many regions will see increases in heat extremes, extended heat waves and intense precipitation events leading to yield reduction, soil erosion and increased flooding. At high latitudes, annual river runoff and water availability

will increase, while many semi-arid regions, including the Western U.S., Mediterranean Basin, southern Africa and northeast Brazil, will see a decrease in water availability.⁸ Already, changes in weather patterns have had demonstrable effects on agriculture globally, as droughts and heavy precipitation have inflicted crop damage and decreased yields.⁹

Weed, disease and pest pressures will also increase as a result of climate change. Many weeds and insect pests that thrive in warm weather will gain hold in regions previously too cool to support their growth, and increased carbon dioxide levels will likely benefit weeds more than food crops.^{10,11} Monoculture crop systems that make up the bulk of U.S. agriculture will be particularly at risk from increases in weed and pest pressures, as well as changing microclimates. Unlike polyculture systems, where a diversity of crop types planted together, or in close proximity, ensures some protection against devastation from pests or weather, monocultures are highly vulnerable systems that can be wiped out entirely from a single pest, blight or weather event.

Animal agriculture will be negatively affected as well. Higher levels of animal disease and parasites are predicted with increased temperatures, and this will likely result in greater costs for disease control and higher levels of livestock mortality. Further, the decline in grain yields and resulting decreased grain availability could lead to increased feed costs and overall livestock production costs, especially for industrial confinement systems.

All of these changes will have profound effects on farmers' ability to raise crops and feed animals, and therefore to feed, clothe and fuel a growing population. The effects will differ greatly by crop and region, and will likely affect farmers in lower latitudes, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, most severely. These regions are also where technology and information transfer is the lowest, where a majority of livelihoods depend on agriculture, and where the most food insecure peoples live—pointing not only to a coming climate crisis, but also to growing concerns about food security and economic development.¹²

4. Kucharik, C.J. and S.P. Serbin, 2008: Impacts of recent climate change on Wisconsin corn and soybean yield trends. *Environ. Res. Lett.*, (July-September 2008), 3.

5. CCSP, 2008, The effects of climate change on agriculture, land resources, water resources, and biodiversity. A Report by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. P. Backlund, A. Janetos, D. Schimel, J. Hatfield, K. Boote, P. Fay, L. Hahn, C. Izaurrealde, B.A. Kimball, T. Mader, J. Morgan, D. Ort, W. Polley, A. Thomson, D. Wolfe, M. Ryan, S. Archer, R. Birdsey, C. Dahm, L. Heath, J. Hicke, D. Hollinger, T. Huxman, G. Okin, R. Oren, J. Randerson, W. Schlesinger, D. Lettenmaier, D. Major, L. Poff, S. Running, L. Hansen, D. Inouye, B.P. Kelly, L. Meyerson, B. Peterson, R. Shaw. (Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2008) 21-74.

6. Wolfram Schlenker and Michael J. Roberts, "Nonlinear temperature effects indicate severe damages to U.S. crop yields under climate change," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Aug. 24, 2009.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Fourth Assessment, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
9. U.S. Department of Agriculture, "U.S. Climate Change Science Program Releases Report on the Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land and Water Resources and Biodiversity," Press advisory, (Washington DC: May 27, 2009),
http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB/.cmd/ad/.ar/sa.retrievecontent/.c/6_2_1UH/.ce/7_2_5JM/.p/5_2_4TQ/.d/7/_th/J_2_9D/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?PC_7_2_5JM_contentid=2008/05/0136.xml&PC_7_2_5JM_parentnav=LATEST_RELEASES&PC_7_2_5JM_navid=NEWS_RELEASE
10. U.S. GCRP, Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States, (Washington, DC: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
11. USDA Agriculture Research Service, "As CO2 Levels Rise, Plants—and Humans—Respond,"
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/nov09/carbon1109.htm> (accessed November 24, 2009).
12. FAO, Climate Change and bioenergy challenges for food and agriculture, (Rome: FAO, 2009) 4.

The World Food Programme publishes these frightening statistics:

Global Hunger

- 1.02 billion people do not have enough to eat - more than the populations of USA, Canada and the European Union; *FAO news release*, 19 June 2009
- The number of undernourished people in the world increased by 75 million in 2007 and 40 million in 2008, largely due to higher food prices; *FAO news release*, 9 Dec 2008
- 907 million people in developing countries alone are hungry; *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, FAO, 2008
- Asia and the Pacific region are home to over half the world's population and nearly two thirds of the world's hungry people; *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, FAO, 2008
- More than 60 percent of chronically hungry people are women; *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, FAO, 2006
- 65 percent of the world's hungry live in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, FAO, 2008

Hunger isn't just in "those other" countries; it exists in the United States as well. The USDA 2008 report on household food security in America indicated that levels of food insecurity and "very low food security" had increased 11.1 and 4.1 percent, respectively, since the *previous year*, and were the highest since the first nationally representative food security survey in 1995. That means 17 million households did not have consistent, dependable access to enough food during the year of the survey, and in 6.7 million households, "the food intake of some household members was reduced, and their normal eating patterns were disrupted because of the household's food insecurity." Food security is "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life," something most would agree is a basic human right, yet more than one in ten US families faced it in 2008. Of course, the nature of household-based surveys

necessarily omits homeless people and families, which may be a substantial number of cases, and certainly includes the most severe conditions. Of course, a large percentage (55%) of food insecure households are already participating in at least one (and often more) of the three largest food and nutrition assistance programs, so the exhortation to “apply for food stamps” or “visit the food pantry” is redundant in most cases. Furthermore, the poorest, least food secure populations often live in “food deserts,” where grocery stores and farmer’s markets are rare and low-cost food is available from fast food restaurants. (Nord, Mark, Margaret Andrews, and Steven Carlson. *Household Food Security in the United States, 2008*. ERR-83, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Econ. Res. Serv. November 2009.)

Food insecurity can be addressed. Farmer’s markets nationwide have been authorized to accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. During the 2008 election, President Obama pledged to end child hunger in the United States by 2015. Jim Weill, Food Research and Action Center president, proposes a seven-step plan to end childhood hunger. The plan recommends the restoration of economic growth with job creation and increased wages, lowering taxes for low-income workers while increasing minimum wage, strengthening SNAP and Child Nutrition Programs (which provides free breakfast and lunch to schoolchildren), making the effort government-side, ending food deserts, and finally by working with state and local governments in addition to nonprofit organizations. (Natasha Chart, “Ending Child Hunger by 2015,” *Sustainable Food*, change.org)

The Jewish community must also meet the challenge. Jewish food pantries have long served the needs of local families, and a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) project (Tuv Ha’Aretz or Hazon CSA) sprang up in 2004; in 2010, it was active in 41 communities across the United States. What can you do to address hunger in a Jewish way? Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger, publishes resources on food insecurity and Judaism. Their lesson, “Hunger and Food in our Tradition,” states: Hunger has many causes. But we must remember that, in terms of G-d’s role, we must place the responsibility to end world hunger on people, on ourselves. Through G-d’s will, the world produces enough food for all – It is simply a matter of distributing it properly (which is the purview of human beings). By saying *Birkat HaMazon* after we eat, we not only thank G-d for the food with which we have been provided, but we also confront our responsibility to make food available to all. The Torah clearly states that we must assist our neighbors who live in poverty. *Deuteronomy 15:7*: You shall not close your hand for your fellow man who is poor. The prophet Isaiah encouraged, “¹⁰If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. ¹¹The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.” The Rabbis made it even more personal. *Talmud Shavuot 39a*: All Jews are responsible for one another. Maimonides, in his Mishneh Torah, exhorted us: It is a positive command to give *tzedakah* to poor people according to their needs if the giver is able (*Hilhot Matanot La’aní’im 7:1*). Furthermore, we are not allowed to shame a person who is poor (*Mishneh Torah Zeraim 10:5*), and when possible, we should give the highest degree of *tzedakah*, which is to help someone find a job with which they may support themselves (*Mishneh Torah Zeraim 10:7*).

From H. Eric Shockman’s article, “Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat,” published March 31, 2009, on Mazon.org.

As the weather grows warmer and the days grow longer, American Jews are preparing to celebrate Passover. Every spring, we remember our people's escape from bondage and flight to freedom with songs and stories read from the Haggadah, our traditional guide to the Seder meal. Our primary symbol is a very simple one: matzo, the dry, cracker-like food that we also call "the bread of affliction."

As we gather, our homes filled with friends and our tables with food, our thoughts on slavery, affliction, and remembrances that we were once "strangers in a strange land," it is easy to forget that affliction is not a thing of the distant past – that even as we sit down to our holiday meal, many Americans are virtual strangers in their own land, afflicted and enslaved by hunger.

The Seder is not merely a meal however, it is tool for education, a call to social action. This year, it comes at a time when many, many American families face times harder than they ever imagined. Today, some 37.5 million Americans live in poverty – a number that includes 13 million children – and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that as many as 10 million more of our fellow citizens will have slipped below the poverty line by year's end. The people who suffer the most in hard times are not those at the top, but those who were already in need when the hard times hit.

The Haggadah wisely guards against the tendency to see religious ritual as a lifeless thing that refers only to the story of the Israelites from the past. We are told that in every generation, we must see ourselves as if we had personally gone out of Egypt. We must take the lessons of bondage and freedom into our daily lives, and apply them to the world around us. As we break matzo with those we love, this year of all years, we must certainly remember the millions who do not have enough food on their own tables.

That is why, next week, we will bring together, not just Jews, but people of all faiths and backgrounds, lawmakers and activists, students and community leaders, to hold a special Seder in the U.S. Capitol, focused on the issues of hunger and child nutrition. This event will kick off a series of similar Seders to be held across the country, as Jewish groups and interfaith leaders convene not just to celebrate the Jewish people's historical escape from slavery, but to highlight this country's obligation to ensure that all of our children escape the affliction of hunger.

As a nation, we are only as strong as our weakest members, and surely, we cannot move forward if we fail to care for our children. As the ancient Israelites had to take action in order to achieve their own exodus, so it is today: Hunger can only be defeated if we all take on the responsibility.

As such, these Seders will call on Americans to educate themselves, to advocate on behalf of the hungry to their legislators, and to organize their loved ones and community to take action. Our hope is that the universal message of the right to freedom from want will echo in the halls of Congress, and that our elected

officials will see to it that our next federal budget prioritizes meeting Americans' most basic human needs.

To effectively grapple with childhood hunger, Congress will have to invest substantially in new funding for child nutrition programs. More communities must have access to school breakfast and summer feeding programs, rules must be shaped that will make it simpler for families to participate, and the nutritional quality of the food provided must be improved. \$20 billion, over the next five years, will be a critical investment to making the improvements that these programs urgently need – but not only will such changes make a real difference in the lives of boys and girls currently living in poverty, they will be a vital step toward meeting President Obama's stated goal of ending child hunger in this country by 2015.

The good news is that these ideas build on an existing foundation, laid by Congressional advocates in recent years. Increases in the Food Stamp benefit were an important part of the Administration's stimulus package, and last year's Farm Bill contained a robust nutrition title, with 73 percent of the bill's total dedicated to the funding of nutrition programs such as Food Stamps and emergency food assistance, as well as programs designed to bring more fresh fruits and vegetables to schools in low-income areas.

It is simply not enough to leave these issues to the good will of individual people or philanthropies. The simple truth is that hunger, like slavery, is a political condition. It is not a lack of food, but a lack of action and will that perpetuates hunger in the lives of our youngest citizens.

When the Israelites were called to leave behind their suffering, they had to do so in a hurry – and so, not having time to allow their bread to rise, they traveled into the desert with matzo, hard bread that served also to remind them of the hard life they had left behind. Today, we too are in a rush, as every day spent in hunger is one too many. The time to act is not next month or next year, but now.

It is important to remember, however, that Passover is not just a holiday of exodus, but also a time of renewal. As the ragtag crowd of Israelites left Egypt and were formed into the Jewish people, so too can the America people rise to their own challenges, and become a better, stronger nation as a result. As people of faith, we know that we are called to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. To not do so would be an affront to G-d and all we hold dear. As Americans, we know that generational poverty – the empty belly of a child – weakens and destabilizes our country as a whole.

“Let all who are hungry come and eat,” we read in the Haggadah, “let all who are in need come share our Passover.”

Let us all – Jews, Christians, Muslims, people of any and all faiths – carry this simple, powerful message with us into the world, and take the actions so urgently needed to free American children from hunger.
(Emphasis mine.)

Mazon has published a “Child Nutrition Haggadah.” The following is a re-imagining of part of the organization’s Child Nutrition Seder.

Ha Lachma Anya: The Bread of Poverty

(This lengthy section is meant to be read by multiple persons. We suggest assigning each paragraph to a different reader.)

(READER) Ha Lachma Anya: This is the bread of poverty/affliction which our ancestors ate in Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. All who are needy, come celebrate Passover with us.

(READER) “Let all who are hungry come and eat” are words that have resonated at Passover *Seders* for generations. We symbolically summon all people who suffer with hunger, with malnutrition or food insecurity to receive nourishment and to be comforted by the companionship of others at the table. The “symbolic guests” are welcomed with compassion, understanding and empathy for their struggle to achieve the freedom from hunger for which they yearn.

(READER) Even before the current economic crisis, many people needed to turn to community nutrition programs to survive. Due to the economic crisis, increased need is resulting in unparalleled demand on the resources of food assistance programs.

A Mazon Passover Reflection

All read together

(READER) During his campaign for the presidency, Barack Obama made a promise to the American people to end childhood hunger by 2015. This is achievable! We have the tools, what we need is the will to use those tools properly so that no child goes hungry.

(PARTICIPANTS) Next year and in the years to come may we not experience hunger. Now we are slaves to hunger, by 2015 may we be free.

(READER, *point to the empty plate*) With this empty plate, we remember all those who are hungry. They are even less fortunate than the Israelites, who had *lechem oni*, the bread of poverty. Let us now “fill the plate” with our intention to take action. Please consider donating the amount that would have been spent on food for one additional *Seder* guest—the “symbolic guest,” or some other amount that is meaningful for you.

Emphasizing the Symbols of Passover.

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיָּא דַּי אֶכְּ, לֹו אֲבָהֵת, נָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דַּד כִּפְיָן יִיתִי וְיִכּוּל, כָּל דַּד צָרִיךְ יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח. הַשְׁתָּא הֲכָא,
לְשׁוֹנָה הַבְּאַה בְּאַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. הַשְׁתָּא עֲבָדִי, לְשׁוֹנָה הַבְּאַה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין:

Ha lachma anya di achalu avhatana b'ara d'mitzrayim. Kol dichfin yeitei v'yeichol, kol ditzrich yeitei v'yifsach. Hashata hacha, l'shanah haba-ah b'ara d'yisra-eil. Hashata avdei, l'shanah haba-ah b'nei chotin.

This is the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

Let all who are hungry come and eat.

Let all who are in need, come and celebrate Passover.

Today, we are here. Next year, in the land of Israel.

Today, we are slaves. Next year, we will be free.

Mah Nishtanah - מה נשתנה

“Four Questions”

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

Mah nishtanah ha-laylah hazeh mikol ha-leilot?

Why is this night of Passover different from all other nights of the year?

1. שבת כל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה. הלילה הזה כולו מצה:

Sheb'chol ha-leilot anu och'lin chameitz umatzah. Ha-laylah hazeh kulo matzoh.

On all other nights, we eat either leavened or unleavened bread, why on this night do we eat only matzoh?

2. שבת כל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות הלילה הזה מרור:

Sheb'chol ha-leilot anu och'lin sh'ar y'rakot. Ha-laylah hazeh maror.

On all other nights, we eat vegetables of all kinds, why on this night must we eat bitter herbs?

3. שבת כל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת. הלילה הזה שתי פעמים:

Sheb'chol ha-leilot ein anu matbilin afilu pa-am echat. Ha-laylah hazeh sh'tei f'amim.

On all other nights, we do not dip vegetables even once, why on this night do we dip greens into salt water and bitter herbs into sweet charoset?

4. שבת כל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין. הלילה הזה כולנו מסבין:

Sheb'chol ha-leilot anu okhlim bein yoshvin uvein m'subin, halailah hazeh kulanu m'subin.

On all other nights, everyone sits up straight at the table, why on this night do we recline and eat at leisure?

The purpose of the Four Questions is to “educate the young by stimulating their questions and providing them with appropriate answers, as well as to provide a structured opportunity for adults to probe the same issues more thoroughly.” The questions asked now are different than those asked at Seders prior to the destruction of the Temple. Then, the Seder primarily focused on celebrating “Israel’s redemption and freedom,” and was not considered “a memorial of its previous subjugation and oppression.” After the Temple was destroyed, and “the Jews lost the last vestiges of their national freedom,” the question regarding the consumption of the bitter herbs was added [and another question about the consumption of the Paschal sacrifice omitted], so that Seder participants would be reminded of the “tribulations of the Israelites who were enslaved.” (Sicker *A Passover Seder Companion and Analytic Introduction to the Haggadah* 34-37)

In the light of the tradition of changing the seder according to change in the circumstances of freedom, I suggest we reflect now on the meanings of slavery and freedom. Mitzrayim, or Egypt, also means “the narrow place.” What narrow places in our own lives have kept us enslaved? What types of thinking and behavior prevent us from making the changes and living the lives we would like? Because this is an environmental haggadah, we will focus on the types of “green” changes many of us would like to make...someday. Because our country is currently enslaved to its polluting agricultural practices and overuse of fossil fuels, we should be reminded of the bitterness of slavery. Because our own lives are often enslaved to long commutes and mortgages on large houses, we should meditate on the astringency of our bondage, symbolized by the horseradish.

There are many reasons why we fall short, environmentally speaking. Sometimes, when people act in a way that is less than eco-friendly, it is because they do not wish to be seen as too thrifty or cheap, or to be perceived as poor. Is your mitzrayim a philosophy and lifestyle that prizes material wealth over other types of richness, or a desire to keep up with one’s “neighbors” financially?

Another common excuse for not acting with the environment in mind is comfort. For example, we are used to central air conditioning in summers, and do not wish to return to a time when the heat of August was cut only by the blades of a ceiling fan. Furthermore, many of us enjoy riding bicycles for exercise or leisure, but refuse to use them to commute, for fear of getting wet in the rain or being cold in the winter. Is your mitzrayim a fear of discomfort?

The inconvenience of many environmental practices is a third reason why fewer people act green though they desire to. Recycling containers requires rinsing them, and paper must be sorted in order to be recycled, where throwing things away (landfill garbage) does not entail such time-consuming tasks. Cooking at home also takes more time and planning than dining in restaurants or reheating prepackaged foods (despite the payoffs of flavor and knowing the ingredients and origins of one’s food). Is your mitzrayim a lack of time to act in an eco-conscious manner?

Finally, a desire to fit in with one’s peers and community can be an obstacle to environmentally-friendly action. If such behaviors are seen as unusual or if they will be questioned, some may be unwilling to minimize their consumption, eat vegetarian, or buy second-hand clothing or cars. For example, those who recycle “religiously” at home may not invite embarrassment or discomfort by insisting upon the practice in a social setting. Peer pressure affects all age groups, and being part of a community is incredibly important. Is your mitzrayim fear of looking “too different”?

Think about the places in your life that are too narrow. Where do you need to cut out the chametz in order to emerge and dance free on the opposite shore of your Sea of Reeds?

The previous excuses can be addressed privately and publicly on the levels of city, state, and federal government. Try making small changes at home and work for big changes in the public sphere by exercising your vote and supporting organizations that work to make a difference in environmental issues. For example, if curbside, multistream recycling is not available in your community, and your family currently does not recycle at all, try making a small change by collecting only cans or bottles to transport to the nearest recycling facility. Additionally, agitate

for more-convenient recycling alternatives in your town. If you own a business or supervise employees, make it convenient for (you and) them to commute by bike by relaxing the dress code if necessary, making a shower available if possible, and installing a bike rack or providing a secure space for bikes. Further, support local biking and bike activist groups, and vote for funding for public transportation and bike lanes. If your peer group values the newest, most expensive in clothing and gadgets, mention that you found a “fantastic vintage dress” at the local thrift store, or reveal the “great deal” you got on your previously-owned car the next time such a topic arises in conversation. Further, spend time cultivating friendships with those most closely aligned with your values while continuing to lead by example among those who aren’t yet on the environmental bandwagon.

And now, try this alternative to the Four Questions.

How will this Passover be different from Passovers in the past?

1. In the past, we have used disposable plates, silverware, glasses, and napkins. Why now do we use durable, reusable alternatives, even though we don’t like to do dishes?
2. In the past, we bought any fruit and vegetable we liked, regardless of origin, season, or agricultural practice. Why now do we buy organic or local produce?
3. In the past, we drove to the seder in order to save time. Why now do we walk, bike, or use public transportation whenever we can, though we are as busy as before?
4. In the past, we bought new clothes for the Seder, even though our closets were bursting. Why this year, did we donate our older, unused clothing to a shelter or non-profit resale organization instead?

(If none of these questions apply to you, provide your own!)

עבדים היינו - Avadim Hayinu
 Storytelling: “We Were Slaves”

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. ויציאנו יי אל הינו משם, ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה, ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אבותינו ממצרים, הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו, משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. ואפילו כלנו חכמים, כלנו גבונים, כלנו זקנים, כלנו יודעים את התורה, מצוה עליו לספור ב יציאת מצרים. וכל המרבה לספור ב יציאת מצרים, הרי זה משבח:

Avadim hayinu l'faroh b'mitzrayim. Vayotzi-einu Adonai Eloheinu misham, b'yad chazakah uvizroa n'tuyah, v'ilu lo hotzi hakadosh Baruch hu et avoteinu mimitzrayim, harei anu uvaneinu uv'nei vaneinu, m'shubadim hayinu l'faroh b'mitzrayim. Va-afilu kulanu chachamim, kulanu n'vonim, kulanu z'keanim, kulanu yod'im et hatorah, mitzvah aleinu l'sapeir bitzi-at mitzrayim. V'chol hamarbeh l'sapeir bitzi-at mitzrayim, harei zeh m'shubach.

We were slaves in Egypt and G-d freed us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Had not G-d liberated our people from Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would still be enslaved.

Avadim hayinu means “we were slaves.” The Passover story teaches us that we were freed from slavery by G-d. By the miracle of G-d’s action, the Israelites left bondage and became a nation. Of course, G-d did not free us from the Egyptians in order that we might do anything we wished; rather, our redemption came with the responsibility of Torah, received at Sinai. Though “retribution theology” is unpopular today, the idea can be more understandable (and more in line with our concepts of a loving G-d or of a universal power) when applied to the environment. Though it has been understood as “do what G-d says or suffer the consequences!” a better interpretation might be, “the earth responds to human action and inaction.” While we dislike

the idea that G-d would “send down” a drought to punish human immorality, most of us are familiar and comfortable with the concept that human greed (whether for meat or oil) affects the planet (in the forms of rainforest devastation and air pollution) and that these effects have changed our ecosystem in ways that look a lot like plague, pestilence, and destruction (global weather change).

The Reconstructionist prayerbook *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Vehagim* states in its commentary on Shharit: the Shema and its Blessings, in response to this paragraph from Deuteronomy 11:13-21:

“And if you truly listen to my bidding, as I bid you now--loving The Fount of Life, your G-d, and serving G-d with all your heart, with every breath--then I will give you rain upon your land in its appointed time, the early rain and the later rain, so you may gather in your corn, your wine and oil. And I will give you grass upon your field to feed your animals, and you will eat and be content. *Beware, then, lest your heart be led astray, and you go off and worship other G-ds, and you submit to them, so that the anger of The Mighty One should burn against you, and seal up the heavens so no rain would fall, so that the ground would not give forth her produce, and you be forced to leave the good land I am giving you.*” [Emphasis mine.]

“What human action could result in the destruction of the rains, the onset of crop failure and famine? Abuse of the ecosystem upon which our very lives depend. And how could such an event occur? When we lose sight of our place in the world and the wondrous gift in all that is. The traditional second paragraph of the Shema was replaced by another biblical selection in earlier Reconstructionist liturgy because the traditional paragraph was understood as literal reward and punishment. However, today in the light of our awareness of the human abuse of the environment, we recognize that often this reward and punishment rest in our own hands. This ancient and yet vital message of the Torah urges us to choose life. (Rabbi David A. Teutsch, “Commentary,” p. 283)

The concepts of redemption, retribution, and responsibility are important in Judaism. Whenever a people are redeemed, they enter into a covenant that requires some responsibility on their part. Failure to meet the requirements of the covenant causes some type of negative effect. Our tradition details at least three covenants, aside from that created during the Exodus, and they all teach important environmental lessons.

Human beings and Creation: When the first human beings were “given” the earth, they were given the responsibility to take care of (“to till and to keep”) the garden in which they were placed. (Genesis 2:15) The covenant of Adam was simple: G-d created the earth and allowed Adam to work it; as payment, Adam would be able to eat of its fruits (with the exception of fruit of the tree of knowledge, of course). The first humans, according to the myth, were the gardeners and protectors of a sacred earth, one that came into existence from chaos, at the bidding of the Creator. The gardener Adam named each of the animals in the garden, assisting in the last part of creation and looking for a partner. When no suitable cohort was found for Adam among the other animals, G-d created another of his species so that Adam would not be alone. G-d stated clearly, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” In this way, the Creator stamped community with his approval.

When Adam and his partner, Chavah, failed to meet the requirements of the commandment and ate of the tree of knowledge, they broke the covenant with G-d. As a result, G-d cursed the very earth from which he made Adam: "...in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:17b-19)

By breaking the covenant, Adam was no longer fed easily from the earth; by not fulfilling his responsibility to till and keep the garden, Adam and Chavah were sent away from the garden, and were required to wrestle with the soil in order to bring bread forth from it. In a way, Adam and Chavah represent the change from hunter-gatherer society to agriculture. This changed allowed for the glories of civilization, but it also set human beings up to have an adversarial relationship with the planet, as it involves manipulating the soil to our own ends, rather than simply gathering and collecting the bounty of the ecosystem. Human beings cannot return to a hunter-gatherer society, but we can take a lesson from their books and eat locally when possible. One way to do so is to learn indigenous, edible and medicinal plants for your area. Though often considered "weeds" by those who are unaware of their value, these plants fed native people for centuries before "modern agriculture" changed the way we eat. Further, such knowledge is quickly disappearing, so it is important to learn this important content to preserve it for future generations.

The Creation Covenant is related to the Noahide Covenant via the concept of biodiversity. What does our tradition have to say about biodiversity?

In the Creation story, each plant and animal is said to be made "according to its kind," which indicates that every species is important and has its own inherent value and purpose. Further, each time the phrase "according to its kind" is repeated, G-d judges that it is "good," so each type of animal and plant, whether it is "vegetation, plants yielding seed...trees bearing fruit in which is their seed," or "every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm...and every winged bird," every one of them is good, and together they are "very good." (Genesis 1)

Further, when the humans of the earth are judged *not* to be good, but rather to be corrupt and violent, a single specimen of human righteousness spared the human species and all the animal species from extinction. G-d had stated, before Noah found favor in the Creator's eyes, "I will blot out humanity I created from the face of the ground, humans, beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." (Genesis 6:13) Noah was commanded to bring representatives of each species into the Ark he was directed to build. When the flood is finally over and the animals are allowed to roam free over the earth again, the Torah tells us that it is so that they would breed abundantly and be fruitful and multiply (as the first animals and humans of creation had been commanded). Noah's ark was G-d's biodiversity project. The Noahide covenant is not just between the Creator and Noah, but it was between the planet, G-d, and humans. When the humans and animals left the Ark, G-d promised never to curse the soil again because of human actions, and never again to destroy all living creatures, but that, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8:21) The covenant was sealed with a rainbow:

"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant

with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And G-d said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant *between me and the earth*. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, *I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh*; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between G-d and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." G-d said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth." (Genesis 9:9-17, emphasis mine)

In this way, G-d bound the planet and humans into G-d's promise, which was to keep safe all the species of the earth.

The covenant with Noah makes explicit the hope for a new creation that is implicit in G-d's pronouncing the original creation good. This covenant came in the wake of the corruption of the original creation through the violence initiated by human beings that provoked G-d's decision to destroy all living creatures on the face of the earth, except Noah and those in the ark. After the destruction, G-d permitted a new beginning and resolved never again to curse the soil or destroy everything that lives on it because of human sinfulness. G-d promised this despite the persistence of the source of wickedness, the evil inclination of the human heart (Gen. 8:21-22) that had caused such havoc in the first place. G-d made an "everlasting covenant with every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth" (9:16), and even with the earth itself (9:13-17).

Bernhard Anderson concludes that the hope for human and nonhuman creation is grounded in the sheer grace of G-d's universal, ecological covenant. Despite the fact that the creation is no longer very good in the sense of a universal, "harmonious bioexuberance" (to use Holmes Rolston's wonderful expression), G-d remains committed to its continuation and flourishing, as the prospect of many seedtimes and harvests-not just for Israel but for all the peoples of the earth-suggests (8:22).

G-d's covenant with Noah is the only one referred to in the Bible that is not made with people exclusively, but also with the earth and all its inhabitants, nonhuman as well as human.

--from "Sermon Notes and Discussion Guide: A Commitment to all Creatures, Genesis 9:1-17" *Earth Day Sunday 2002: Protection of G-d's Creatures* by George H. Kehm.

Rabbi Arthur Waskow's "Haftarah for the Rainbow Covenant" explains the universal nature of the agreement between the Creator and Creation.

[Blessed are You, the Breath of Life, Who makes of every human throat a shofar for the breathing of Your truth.]

You, My people, burnt in fire,
still staring blinded

by the flame and smoke
that rose from Auschwitz and from Hiroshima;

You, My people,
Battered by the earthquakes
of a planet in convulsion;

You, My people,
Drowning in the flood of words and images
That beckon you to eat and eat,
to drink and drink,
to fill and overflow
your bellies
at the tables of
the G-ds of wealth and power;

You, My people,
Drowning in the flood of words and images
That -- poured unceasing on your eyes and ears --
drown out My words of Torah,
My visions of the earth made whole;

Be comforted:

I have for you a mission full of joy.
I call you to a task of celebration.

I call you to make from fire not an all-consuming blaze
But the light in which all beings see each other fully.
All different,
All bearing One Spark.
I call you to light a flame to see more clearly
That the earth and all who live as part of it
Are not for burning:
A flame to see
The rainbow
in the many-colored faces
of all life.

I call you:
I, the Breath of Life,
Within you and beyond,
Among you and beyond,
That One Who breathes from redwood into grizzly,
That One Who breathes from human into swampgrass,
That One Who breathes the great pulsations of the galaxies.
In every breath you breathe Me,
In every breath I breathe you.

I call you --
In every croak of every frog I call you,
In every rustle of each leaf,
each life,
I call you,
In the wailings of the wounded earth
I call you.

I call you to a peoplehood renewed:
I call you to reweave the fabric of your folk
and so to join in healing
the weave of life upon your planet.
I call you to a journey of seven generations.

For seven generations past,
the earth has not been able to make Shabbos.
And so in your own generation
You tremble on the verge of Flood.
Your air is filled with poison.
The rain, the seas, with poison.
The earth hides arsenals of poisonous fire,
Seeds of light surcharged with fatal darkness.
The ice is melting,
The seas are rising,
The air is dark with smoke and rising heat.

And so -- I call you to carry to all peoples
the teaching that for seven generations
the earth and all her earthlings learn to rest.
I call you once again
To speak for Me,
To speak for Me because I have no voice,
To speak the Name of the One who has no Name,
To speak for all the Voiceless of the planet.

Who speaks for the redwood and the rock,
the lion and the beetle?

My Breath I blow through you into a voicing:
Speak for the redwood and the rock,
the lion and the beetle.

I call you to a task of joy:
For seven generations,
this is what I call for you to do:

To make once more the seasons of your joy

into celebrations of the seasons of the earth;
To welcome with your candles the dark of moon and sun,
To bless with careful chewing
the fruits of every tree
For when you meet to bless
the rising juice of life
in every tree trunk --
I am the Tree of Life.

To live seven days in the open, windy huts,
And call out truth to all who live beside you --
You are part of the weave and breath of life,
You cannot make walls to wall it out.

I call you to a covenant between the generations:
That when you gather for a blessing of your children
as they take on the tasks of new tomorrows,
You say to them, they say to you,
That you are all My prophet
Come to turn the hearts of parents
and of children toward each other,
Lest my earth be smashed in utter desolation.

I call you
To eat what
I
call
kosher:
Food that springs from an earth you do not poison,
Oil that flows from an earth you do not drain,
Paper that comes from an earth you do not slash,
Air that comes from an earth you do not choke.

I call you to speak
to all the peoples,
all the rulers.

I call you to walk forth before all nations,
to pour out water that is free of poison
and call them all to clean and clarify the rains of winter.

I call you to beat your willows on the earth
and shout its healing to all peoples.

I call on you to call on all the peoples
to cleanse My Breath, My air,
from all the gases
that turn My earth into a furnace.

I call you to light the colors of the Rainbow,
To raise once more before all eyes
That banner of the covenant between Me,
and all the children of Noah and Naamah,
and all that lives and breathes upon the Earth --
So that
never again,
all the days of the earth, shall
sowing and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
ever cease!

I call you to love the Breath of Life --
For love is the fire
That blazes in the Rainbow.

[Blessed are You, the Breath of Life, Who makes of every human throat a shofar
for the breathing of Your truth.]
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Furthermore, the flood myth demonstrates human interdependence with nature.

Genesis 6:13: G-d said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness because of them: I am about to destroy them with earth."

Joseph B'khor Shor, "I am about to destroy them with earth," They destroyed their way and now I will destroy them. For I will destroy with them all the cattle and animals, birds and trees and vegetation, and everything that is upon the earth. For it is all corrupted by violence and all of it was created for them. Numerous commentators of Torah have underscored the extent to which the flood of this week's parashah represents the undoing of Creation. Only six chapters earlier, G-d created a magnificent world—imposing order on seemingly primordial chaos—and appointed humans as the caretakers of the earth. Subsequently, the divine plan goes awry as Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden; Cain murders his brother, Abel; and then divine beings cohabit with the daughters of men. This is clearly not the world intended by G-d. The crescendo of destruction, however, is triggered by Torah's comment that "the Lord saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time" (Gen. 6:5). How does G-d come to the fateful decision to destroy mankind and indeed all of Creation? Why begin anew?

Joseph B'khor Shor inspires serious philosophical introspection in this direction. Basing his comments on the verse which comes immediately before G-d's announcement to Noah (Gen. 6:12), he explains that we are witness to an example of justice meted out "measure for measure." Because "all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth," G-d unravels the creative act. Humans, through

their debased behavior, destroyed the boundaries imposed by G-d. Accordingly, G-d responds by destroying the boundaries set over the six days of Creation and the waters of destruction are unleashed on humanity. Emil Fackenheim argues that it is the response from below that calls forth the response from above. For good and for bad, this is certainly the case.

More than that, Joseph B'khor Shor takes his commentary a step further. Far from acquiescing in the face of this brutal divine punishment, the B'khor Shor wrestles, asking implicitly, "Why does G-d destroy the animals and entire earth as well? Would not it have been sufficient simply to punish humanity?" For that reason, he explains that all of Creation was fashioned in service of humanity. And since it was created for man, it too is destined for destruction. The message is clear: we share the same fate as animals and the environment; and, clearly, animals and the environment are influenced by our behavior. If, ultimately, Torah teaches us anything, it conveys the message of interdependence. We, animals and humans, are dependent on each other on earth; we, G-d and humans, are dependent on each other in the heavens above and the earth below. May we, as Noah, be blessed with receding waters of chaos in our time, learning to plant and renew in harmony with the divine plan.

--from "A Taste of Torah: A Commentary on Joseph B'khor Shor by Rabbi Matthew Berkowitz," in *Torah from JTS*, Parashat B'reishit, Genesis 1:1–6:8, October 17, 2009

The covenant between G-d, the people of Israel, and the land of Israel is well understood by Torah scholars and most educated Jews have at least a general understanding that, when G-d led the people out of slavery and into the wilderness, a community was created. That community entered into an agreement with the Creator at Sinai, and was given a homeland (Israel), as long as the community kept the commandments handed down. Deuteronomy chapter 5 details the covenant:

Moses summoned all Israel, and said to them: Listen, Israel, to the rules and laws that I am publicly declaring to you today. Learn them and safeguard them, so that you will be able to keep them. G-d your Lord made a covenant with you at Horeb. It was not with your ancestors that G-d made this covenant, but with us - those of us who are still alive here today. On the mountain, G-d spoke to you face to face out of the fire. I stood between you and G-d at that time, to tell you G-d's words, since you were afraid of the fire, and did not go up on the mountain. [G-d then] declared [the Ten Commandments]. I am G-d your Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, from the place of slavery. Do not have any other G-ds before Me. Do not represent [such G-ds] by a statue or picture of anything in the heaven above, on the earth below, or in the water below the land. Do not bow down to [such G-ds] and do not worship them. I, G-d, am a G-d who demands exclusive worship. Where My enemies are concerned, I keep in mind the sin of the fathers for [their] descendants for three and four [generations]. But to those who love Me, and keep My commandments, I show love for thousands [of generations]. Do not take the name of G-d in vain. G-d will not allow the person who takes His name in vain to go unpunished. Observe the Sabbath to keep it holy, as G-d commanded you. You can work during the six weekdays, and do all your tasks, but Saturday is the Sabbath to G-d, so do not

do anything that constitutes work. [This includes] you, your son, your daughter, your male and female slave, your ox, your donkey, your [other] animals, and the foreigner who is in your gates. Your male and female slaves will then be able to rest just as you do. You must remember that you were slaves in Egypt, when G-d brought you out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. It is for this reason that G-d has commanded you to keep the Sabbath. Honor your father and mother as G-d commanded you. You will then live long and have it well on the land that G-d is giving you. Do not commit murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not testify as a perjurious witness against your neighbor. Do not desire your neighbor's wife. Do not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male or female slave, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor. G-d spoke these words in a loud voice to your entire assembly from the mountain, out of the fire, cloud and mist, but He added no more. He wrote [these words] on two stone tablets, and [later] gave them to me. When you heard the voice out of the darkness, with the mountain burning in flames, your tribal leaders and elders approached me. You said, 'It is true that G-d our Lord has showed us His glory and greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the fire. Today we have seen that when G-d speaks to man, he can still survive. But now, why should we die? Why should this great fire consume us? If we hear the voice of G-d our Lord any more, we will die! 'What mortal has heard the voice of the living G-d speaking out of fire as we did and has survived? You approach G-d our Lord, and listen to all He says. You can transmit to us whatever G-d our Lord tells you, and when we hear it, we will do it.' G-d heard what you said, and G-d told me, 'I have heard what this nation has said to you. They have spoken well. If only their hearts would always remain this way, where they are in such awe of Me. They would then keep all My commandments for all time, so that it would go well with them and their children forever. 'Go tell them to return to their tents. You, however, must remain here with Me. I will declare to you all the rules and laws that you shall teach them, so they will keep them in the land that I am giving them to occupy.' Be careful to do what G-d has commanded you, not turning to the right or left. *Follow the entire way that G-d has commanded you, so that you may live and do well, enduring for a long time on the land that you are going to occupy.*

Rabbinic Judaism affirms that all of tradition was handed down with the written Torah at Sinai. Halachah in regard to the land of Israel (Mitzvot Ha'teluyot Be'aretz) is extensive, and much of it is covered in other sections of this haggadah, but the basics that have environmental consequence include the right of the poor to glean the fields, and the Sabbatical and Jubilee years.

According to the covenant created at Sinai, if the people of Israel failed to meet the demands of the mitzvot, they would be exiled from the land. Martin Buber's concept of I-Thou relationships is a good metaphor for the relationship between the community and the land of Israel.

When I confront a human being as my You and speak the basic word I-You to him, then he is no thing among things nor does he consist of things. He is no longer He or She, limited by other He's and She's, a dot in the world grid of space and time, nor a condition that can be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. Neighborless and seamless, he is You and fills

the firmament. Not as if there were nothing but he; but everything else lives in his light.

Even as a melody is not composed of tones, nor a verse of words, nor a statue of lines--one must pull and tear a unity into a multiplicity--so it is with the human being to whom I say You. I can abstract from him the color of his hair or the color of his speech or the color of his graciousness; I have to do this again and again; but immediately he is no longer You.

--from Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, p. 59

The people were required to be true stewards of the land itself. Eretz Yisrael was provided with rest, just as G-d provided weekly rest for the nation of Israel. Since the diasporah, most Jews no longer live in the land of Israel, and opportunities for some Mitzvot Ha'teluyot Be'aretz no longer exist. It might be tempting to relegate those mitzvot to the backs of halachic texts, but they should instead be applied to our current environmental situations. The people of Israel were to take care of the land, so that they might live on it for generations. Shouldn't the people of the earth be stewards of it, so that many more generations might be blessed with the fruit of a healthy earth? In the way that the Israelites treated Eretz Yisrael, so should the community of Adamah care for the planet.

אַרְבַּע בְּנֵי־יָם - The Four Children

בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. כִּי נִגְדָה אַרְבַּע בְּנֵי־יָם דְּבִרְהוּ תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שֶׁאֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לְשׂאֵל:

Baruch hamakom, baruch hu. Baruch shenatan torah l'amo yisra-eil, baruch hu. K'neged arba-ah vanim dib'rah torah. Echad chacham, v'echad rasha, v'echad tam, v'echad she-eino yodei-a lishol.

The Torah speaks of four types of children: one is wise, one is wicked, one is simple, and one does not know how to ask.

1. חָכָם מַה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מַה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁפָּטִים, אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיהוּ אֵלֶיהֶם יְיָ יְיָ אֱתָנְכֶם? וְאֵיךְ אֶתְהַלְכוּ אִתּוֹ. כִּי הִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְטִירִין אַחֲרֵי הַפֶּסַח אֶפִּיקוֹמָן:

1. Chacham mah hu omeir? Mah ha-eidot v'hachukim v'hamishpatim, asher tzivah Adonai Eloheinu etchem? V'af atah emor lo k'hilchot hapesach. Ein maftirin achar hapesach afikoman.

The Wise One asks: "What is the meaning of the laws and traditions G-d has commanded?" (Deuteronomy 6:20) You should teach him all the traditions of Passover, even to the last detail.

2. רָשָׁע מַה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מַה הָעֵבֶדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם? לָכֶם וּלְאֵלֵינוּ. וְלִפִּי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת־עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכְּלָל, כִּי פָרַח בְּעַקְרָהּ. וְאֵיךְ אֶתְהַלְכוּ הַקְּהֵל אֶת־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאֶמְרֵם: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה, עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם, לִי וְלֹא־לְאֵלֹהֵי אֲלוֹהֵי שָׂמַיִם, לֹא הָיָה נִגְאָל:

2. Rasha, mah hu omer? Mah ha-avodah ha-zot lachem? Lachem v'lo lo. Ul'fi shehotzi et atzmo min hak'lal, kafar ba-ikar. V'af atah hakheih et shinav, ve-emor lo. Ba-avur zeh, asah Adonai li, b'tzeiti mimitzrayim, li v'lo lo. Ilu hayah sham, lo hayah nigal.

The Wicked One asks: "What does this ritual mean to you?" (Exodus 12:26) By using the expression "to you" he excludes himself from his people and denies G-d. Shake his arrogance and say to him: "It is because of what G-d did for me when I came out of Egypt..." (Exodus 13:8) "For me" and not for him -- for had he been in Egypt, he would not have been freed.

3. ת.ם מה הוא אומר? מה ד' את? ואמרת, אליו: ב.ח.זק יד הוציאנו: ממ צר, ים מב. ית עבדים:

3. *Tam mah hu omeir? Mah zot? V'amarta eilav. B'chozek yad hotzi-anu Adonai mimitzrayim mibeit avadim.*

The Simple One asks: "What is all this?" You should tell him: "It was with a mighty hand that G-d took us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

4. וּשְׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לֵשׁ אֹל, אֵת, פִּתְחָ לּוֹ. שֶׁ נֶאֱמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה לִי, בַּצֵּאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם:

4. *V'she-eino yodei-a lishol, at p'tach lo. Shene-emar. V'higadta l'vincha, bayom hahu leimor. Bavur zeh asah Adonai li, b'tzeiti mimitzrayim.*

As for the **One Who Does Not Know How To Ask**, you should open the discussion for him, as it is written: "And you shall explain to your child on that day, 'It is because of what G-d did for me when I came out of Egypt.'" (Exodus 13:8)

Four is an important number in the haggadah and for the seder. We drink four cups of wine, ask the four questions, and finally, discuss the four children. The four children ask questions regarding the Seder, and are called wise, wicked, simple, and "the one who does not know how to ask." The four children have been interpreted in many ways over the years. One important way of understanding the four children is the interpretation that they are personality traits, or stages of development; each person moves through all these "children" when they meet new information throughout their lives. This environmental haggadah understands the four children as four responses to the environmental crisis.

The **first** child, the wise child, asks: "What is the meaning of the laws and practices G-d has commanded us to observe?" and we respond with the Exodus story. We teach this child Torah and provide all the details. Though this child probably already knows the answer to the question, we reply with the laws of Passover, because the commandment is to *tell the story*.

The **second** child, the wicked one, asks: "What does this mean to you?" The wicked child attempts to make herself separate from the community. The answer for this child is "We do these things because G-d brought us out of Egypt," emphasizing our commitment to the Jewish people. Though this child has isolated herself, we include her when giving the answer, "G-d acted for *my* sake when I left Egypt. We all experience the seder as if we personally experienced the liberation."

The **third**, simple, child asks: "What is this?" To the simple child, we respond with an explanation of our deliverance from slavery into freedom. We emphasize the power of the story, "With a strong hand, the Almighty led us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

The **fourth**, final child, who does not know how to ask, is still given an answer. We remind this child that the seder is in celebration of the miracle of the Exodus and for giving thanks to G-d who blessed us with freedom. "All this is because of what G-d did for us when we left slavery."

The four children, responding to the environmental crisis, might ask the following questions:

"What can I do?" The wise child understands that the environment is in trouble, takes responsibility for her behavior, and asks what changes need to be made in order to slow, stop, or reverse ecological damage. This child should be given a task, depending on age and ability. She can volunteer for a green non-profit, work for change in legislation protecting the environment, or assist in minimizing the family's carbon footprint.

"Why should I care?" This child, the wicked one, knows that the environment is being damaged, but feels helpless. This child should be reminded that the planet belongs to G-d, but

responsibility for it is held by every human being. Though the crisis is dire, we can make a difference by changing our wasteful behaviors and by taking action to change public policy. Furthermore, our tradition teaches that the work of tikkun olam is never finished, and just because our individual actions cannot save the Earth, "It is not incumbent upon you to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it." (Avot 2:21)

"Why should I believe?" The simple child is in denial. Though the effects of climate change and pollution are well-documented by science, academia, government, and environmental groups, there are those who disagree that evidence for global climate change is unequivocal.

"Greenhouse doubters (they hate being called deniers) argued first that the world is not warming; measurements indicating otherwise are flawed, they said. Then they claimed that any warming is natural, not caused by human activities. Now they contend that the looming warming will be minuscule and harmless." ("The Truth About Denial," by Sharon Begley; *Newsweek*, from the magazine issue dated Aug 13, 2007) This child must be reminded of the dangers of ignoring evidence and self-deception. The hazard of being mistaken in this case is a hazard to future generations, not just to us.

The final child, the one who does not know about the environmental crisis, must be educated on the issue. This child is wide-eyed, new to the issues of global climate change and how they relate to Judaism, its ethics, and our community. This child should be encouraged to start to understand eco-kashrut and other topics, and provided with opportunities to do so.

The Four Children and the Environment, by Rabbi Shlomo Levin

On Passover we read about the four children- the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who does not know how to ask. Each has a different attitude toward the Passover holiday, and we can often picture a stereotype of what type of person they represent. What if these same four children discussed the environment? What kinds of people could we imagine them to be?

Recently Airbus reported the sale of the first private passenger version of its A380 super jumbo jet, to be called the "flying palace." An unidentified buyer intends to spend more than \$300 million to purchase the largest commercial aircraft ever built, designed to carry 550+ passengers, for his own personal use and pleasure. That means he will be using a vehicle that requires 82,000 gallons of fuel per fill up for private transportation. From an environmental perspective, here is someone we may envision as a wicked child. He takes for himself while not considering the resources made unavailable to others or the environmental harm his actions cause and from which others will suffer. How am I supposed to feel trying to conserve gasoline when I drive while he is flying around in this giant airplane? The Haggadah's response to the wicked child is "You should set his teeth on edge- tell him that if he was in Egypt he wouldn't have been redeemed." Similarly, people that flagrantly disregard the impact of their actions on our environment need to be forcefully told that their behavior is wrong. All the better if this would be done by a government taxing away all their money. Short of that, we need to treat people that behave like this in a way that shows that we are not awed or impressed by their wealth. Rather, we hold them in contempt due to their lack of values. We should let them know that their riches are an embarrassment to them because they make their moral shortcomings more public and visible.

Who is the simple child, whose question consists only of the words, "What is this?" These may be people that are concerned about the environment but due to their limited resources and the pressures of making a living are unable to do anything to improve it, and may even make it worse. For example, one of the main causes of deforestation of tropical rainforests is impoverished farmers cutting down trees in order to increase the land available to them to grow crops. The environmental consequences of this are severe- species are driven to extinction as their natural habitats are destroyed, local climate is altered, and carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere where it contributes to global warming. (1) Quite possibly, the individuals doing this regret the environmental consequences of their actions and would refrain from them if they felt they could. But the immediate need to support themselves and their families via the only means they know trumps all other concerns.

The Haggadah says regarding the simple child to explain to him the basics of the Passover story. Similarly, we need to reach out to people in this predicament with simple, easy to implement ideas that make sense in their situation. We should provide them with the means to engage in more environmentally friendly farming and show them how that can be in their own advantage. We need to find ways to help them raise their standard of living while nurturing their inherent self-interest in sustainability. The ones who do not know how to ask may be people all around us that have no clue about environmental issues at all. Those of us that read Canfei Nesharim's newsletters may forget that most people living in the United States have little or no knowledge of how their lifestyle in particular or our American lifestyles collectively impact the environment.

The damage done by environmental pollution usually happens far away from the polluter, well out of the polluter's sight. It usually does not become apparent for some time, and often is invisible to the eye and only detectable via scientific study. Consider global warming- how would someone who hasn't taken the initiative to read up on this complex issue know about it at all? For those that do not know how to ask we need to provide straightforward information, free of scientific and political jargon, in a manner that will help people draw a clear connection between their actions and their environmental consequences. Environmental labeling on consumer goods is one manner to help people understand the environmental impact of their consumption. If television and movie characters demonstrated concern for the environment those who don't now know how to ask about these issues would learn from their example ways to become involved. If environmental issues would be raised prominently in political campaigns the entire public would be better educated about them.

Lastly, the wise child. The wise child's question, "What are the laws and the statutes and the ordinances that you follow?" may translate as "What are all the consequences of my lifestyle and consumption, direct and indirect, including the entire lifecycle of the products and services I consume?" The answer is to engage this person in discussion, and tell him all the details, so that he can guide his actions accordingly.

People that are involved with environmental concerns need to think through the consequences of their actions, because they will set the example for other

individuals and their demand will guide companies in product innovation and shape the choices that consumers are offered.

Are Styrofoam cups really worse than paper, particularly since paper cups are rarely recycled? Are cloth diapers really better for the environment than disposables, when we take into account the energy used to wash them? These types of trade-offs must be considered and explored.

More broadly, when and how much environmental change or damage should we accept in order to improve the living conditions of other people? It is easy to mount a campaign to save every endangered species and stop every bit of pollution, but more difficult to articulate a clear rationale for evaluating the practical tradeoffs that are necessary to make environmentalism fit into our overall scheme of values.

One final question: Which of these four children will grow to treat our earth best?

It is easy to hold up the wise child as a model and wish that everyone would copy him.

Unfortunately, I don't think we know enough about the wise child from his question in order to be sure. The wise child has knowledge, but does he have compassion and empathy? Does he have real concern for the needs of other people living in the here and now as well as a concern for future generations and the environment?

The wise son knows a lot, but is he still able to learn? Is he willing to hear new ideas, explore new technologies, and try new ways of doing things or is he too busy showing off how environmentally friendly his lifestyle already is to continue adjusting it for the better?

We need more people with all these traits at the tables where environmental issues are discussed, so that our needs are addressed with compassion, wisdom, and justice for today and for future generations.

Notes: 1. See <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Library/Deforestation/>
Originally posted in "On Eagles' Wings" March 27th 2007

The Wicked Child, The Simple Child, The Child Who Does Not Know & The Wise Child:

The wicked child asks, "Who cares?" To this child answer that the Earth is a precious gift. If you do not care for it, its treasures will be exhausted before you can enjoy them. The simple child asks, "What's going on?" To this child explain that every action has consequences. If we continue our wasteful and destructive behavior we will surely regret it. To the child who does not understand enough to ask, it is important to set a good example so the child learns how to act appropriately in the world. And to the wise child who asks, "How did we get here? And where do we go from here?" We tell this story.

--from Daniel Ziskin's Haggadah, *Passover: We Once Were Slaves*, 2002
(published on coejl.org)

According to the Mishnah, the world is judged on Pesach - not by how many boxes of matzoh we consume or by how well we've memorized the Four Questions, but by the fruits which are just beginning to ripen. We learn that if they are good we will continue to be blessed with the earth's abundance in the year to come (*Rosh Hashanah 12*). This is an important environmental

lesson. What is the status of the earth's abundance this year? How do the fruits of the trees compare to those in decades and centuries past? The abundance of our planet has begun to wane, as our plants have been genetically modified, pollution fills our soil and water, and the demands of our populations have begun to outstrip our resources.

מתחלה - In The Beginning

מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו. ועכשו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו. שגאמר: ויאמר יהושע אלכלהעם. כהאמר אלהי ישראל, בעבר הנחישבו אבותיכם מעולם, תרח אבי אברהם ואבי נחור. ויעבדו אלילים אחרים: ואקח אתאביכם אתאברהם מעבר הנחור, ואולך אותו בכלא רץ כנען. וארבה אתזרעו, ואתן לו אתיצחק: ואתן ליצחק אתיעקב ואתיעשו. ואתן לעשו אתהרשעיר, לרשת אותו. ויעקב ובניו ירדו מצרים:

Mit'chilah ov'dei avodah zarah hayu avoteinu. V'achshav keir'vanu hamakom la-avodato. Shene-emar: Vayomer Y'hoshua el kol ha-am. Koh amar Adonai Elohei yisra-eil, b'eiver hanahar yash'vu avoteichem mei-olam, Terach avi avraham va-avi nachor. Vaya-avdu Elohim acheirim. Va-ekach et avichem et avraham mei-eiver ha-nahar, va-oleich oto b'chol eretz k'na-an. Va-arbeh et zaro, va-eten lo et Yitzchak. Va-etein l'yitzchak et Ya-akov v'et Eisav. Va-etein l'eisav et har sei-ir, lareshet oto. V'ya-akov uva-nav yar'du mitzrayim.

At first our ancestors worshiped idols, but now the Omnipresent has brought us near to G-d's service, as it is written: "Joshua said to all the people: so says the G-d of Israel--your ancestors have always lived beyond the Euphrates River, Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor; they worshipped other G-ds. I took your father Abraham from the other side of the river and led him through all the land of Canaan. I multiplied his family and gave him Isaac. To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau; to Esau I gave Mount Seir to inherit, however Jacob and his children went down to Egypt."

ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל. ברוך הוא. שהקדוש ברוך הוא חשב אתהקץ, לעשות כמה שאמר לאברהם אבינו בברית בין הבתרים, שאמר לאברהם ידעת דע, כי יגר יהיה זרעך, בארץ לא להם, ועבדו וענו אתם ארבע מאות שנה: וגם אתהגוי אשר יעבדו דן אנכי. ואחרי כן יצאו ברקש גדול:

Baruch shomeir havtachato l'yisra-eil. Baruch hu. Shehakadosh Baruch hu chishav et hakeitz, la-asot k'mah she-amar l'avraham avinu bivrit bein hab'tarim. Shene-emar: vayomer l'avram yadoa teida, ki geir yihyeh zaracha, b'erezt lo lahem, va-avadum v'inu otam arba meiot shanah. V'gam et hagoy asher ya-avodu dan anochi. V'acharei chein yeitz'u, birchush gadol.

Blessed be G-d who keeps G-d's promise to Israel; blessed be G-d. The holy one, blessed be G-d, predetermined the time for our final deliverance in order to fulfill what G-d had pledged to our father Abraham in a covenant, as it is written: "G-d said to Abram, your descendants will surely sojourn in a land that is not their own, and they will be enslaved and afflicted for four hundred years; however, I will punish the nation that enslaved them, and afterwards they shall leave with great wealth."

והיא שעמדה - V'hee She-amdah

והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו. שלא אחד בלבד, עמד עלינו לכלותנו. אלא שכל דור ודור, עומדים עלינו לכלותנו. והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידידם:

V'hi she-am'dah la-avoteinu v'lanu. Shelo echad bilvad, amad aleinu l'chaloteinu. Ela sheb'chol dor vador, om'dim aleinu l'chaloteinu, v'hakadosh Baruch hu matzileinu mi-yadam.

This covenant that remained constant for our ancestors and for us has saved us against any who arose to destroy us in every generation, and throughout history when any stood against us to annihilate us, G-d kept saving us from them.

“One of the interesting things about the Passover Seder is just how many variations of it there are. There have been thousands of different versions of the haggadah, as each Jewish community has adapted the service for their own needs. The heart and central theme of the seder, the Passover story, is always the same. Each variation reminds its readers that the longing for liberation from oppression is universal. Each version challenges people to remember that G-d and religion should stand upon the side of the oppressed.”

Arthur Waskow, a Rabbi in the Jewish Renewal tradition, was inspired to write his "Freedom Seder" when he was civil rights worker in Washington, DC. The year was 1968 and Martin King had just been assassinated. DC, like a lot of other cities, was in a state of turmoil. Elements of the U.S. Army occupied the streets. As he walked through the streets, Waskow thought to himself: "This is Pharaoh's army, and I am walking home to do the Seder." That night, as he and his friends performed the Seder, they noticed the following passages: "In every generation, one rises up to become an oppressor," and "In every generation, every human being is obligated to say, we ourselves, not our forebears only, go from slavery to freedom."

Over the next several months, Waskow compiled a Seder born out of both the Jewish tradition and the contemporary civil rights struggle. He included stories of the modern Jewish struggle against the Nazis and African American spirituals as well as Yiddish and Hebrew poems and songs. A part of the Seder is dedicated to retelling the story of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising against the Nazis. Other parts celebrate the bravery of many who perished struggling for freedom for their people, whether African American, white, Jewish, Muslim or Christian. Waskow's point was that the Passover story was for everyone and that in each generation we are called to struggle for justice. As his Haggadah reminds us: "In every generation, Pharaoh. In every generation, Freedom.""

--adapted from ©2010 Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland's Sermons: *Haggadah*, by Rev. Colin Bossen, April 20, 2008

If there is a Pharaoh in this generation, who is it? Who are the enslaved?
Today, we are the tyrant Pharaoh. We have enslaved the planet.

Who buys gas-guzzling cars? Who allows politicians to get away with serving the interests of Big Business in the present at the expense of our shared future?
Who allows Congress to subsidize the coal industry while allowing alternative sources of renewable energy to be underfunded?

In our Passover seder, we read another reason, other than slavery, for our need for redemption: "In the beginning, our ancestors were worshipers of idols." Not only the Egyptians worshiped idols. We did, too!

At Passover, we mark the need for liberation not just from external Pharaohs, but from internal ones as well. Passover is a time to ask not just four questions, but hard questions: In what ways are we addicted to oil? To consumption? To

having the newest and the latest and the most advanced? To comfort and convenience that takes a toll and levies a cost that doesn't get tallied up until some later year, off in some distant murky future. To a lifestyle made possible by the hands of and/or adversely affecting people half a world away, out of sight and too often out of mind?

In our seder we read, "In every generation, we are obliged to regard ourselves as though we *ourselves* had actually gone out from Egypt." We are to remember the experience of being slaves, of being disenfranchised, of being the ones with the least power, with the least resources, with the least people looking out for our welfare and our well-being. We are to remember the experience of being valued only for what we can do, what we can do for *others*, rather than for our inherent value as human beings.

Environmental degradation in the United States most severely harms those people who are already the ones with the least power. All one needs to do is think of the aftermath to Hurricane Katrina. Or look at asthma rates in lower-income neighborhoods, or exposure rates to toxic waste. Similarly, the global climate crisis most severely harms people in those countries that also have the least.

While we in the United States will be forced to make gradual changes to adapt to a changing climate, people in other countries will face refugee crises and fierce wars over shifting agricultural and water distribution patterns.

And so, on this Passover, we remember *avadim hayinu*, that *we* were slaves.

We remember that *we* were slaves, doing so in order to remember that our obligation is to help set *everyone* free. And we don't just sing the words. We commit ourselves to making sure that the moral voice continues to be spoken, ensuring that concern for environmental justice continues to be a part of any public policy.

--adapted from "Street Seders for the Global Climate Crisis," Rabbi Jeff Sultar, director of the Shalom Center's *Green Menorah Project*. April 2008, *Zeek Magazine*. © 2006 by Zeek Magazine and the author.

Arthur Waskow explains how very large corporations have become Pharaoh to the world's populations and resources, as well.

In Every Generation, Pharaoh

By Rabbi Arthur Waskow with Lee Moore, 9/8/2001

There is a double spiral in evolutionary and human history: Spirals of growing and deepening Community have given rise to more efficient forms of Control; the newly effective forms of Control have burst the outer and inner bounds of the Community that birthed them; to encompass these newly invented patterns of Control, there have emerged newer, broader, deeper forms of Community; and so on.

This rhythm can be understood as the dance of G-d in the world. But Control has a way of running amok, blocking the rhythm. In the last fifty years there have emerged institutions so huge, so controlling, so global in their reach that they have to a considerable extent escaped the forms of community and connection-

making that have been shaped over the last several centuries by national democratic processes, and have become major top-down unaccountable power centers.

Most of these global institutions have been businesses, understood as "private" corporations despite their enormous power over the planetary public...To put this in the archetypal language of biblical tradition, these global corporations and their servicing institutions are Pharaoh in our generation. Pharaoh was not consciously and deliberately evil; he worried about his country, and grew fearful that an odd and indigestible minority might make trouble for the complex pattern of its governance. The arrogance that grew inside him until he was swallowed up by it was probably rooted in the loneliness of pyramidal power. So much depended on him that he became convinced that his own wisdom was indispensable — and total.

If we look for a Pharaoh in our lives today, we should be looking not for deliberate evil but for people or institutions who hold such great power that they become convinced that they are indispensable, and who are isolated from critical comment and accountability so long that when they meet it they respond chiefly with stubbornness and anger.

Out of his sense of over-all responsibility to the way he understood society was supposed to run, Pharaoh ended up enslaving workers, ordering the deaths of little children, and bringing down upon his country a series of environmental disasters — the "ten plagues."

This much — the increasing rigidity and arrogance of unaccountable power — we may ruefully recognize in many areas of our lives: families, workplaces, whole communities and nations, even the relationship of Homo sapiens to the earth in our own generation. But from this story we learn not only to understand the expectable, but to embrace the unimaginable. For the story teaches that the deepest truth of the universe — G-d's Own Self — rose up against all logical expectations, using both human resistance and the rebellious earth itself to topple the greatest concentration of power in the world and to turn a bunch of runaway slaves into the beacon of history for freedom, justice, and holiness...

What made possible the Bible's story of Exodus, and turned it into the politics of G-d, was the Bible's perception of the Unity that connects all life. From the very existence of that web of consequence came its inner urge to express that web through harmony. If a butterfly's wings can create a hurricane six thousand miles away, if a Pharaoh's arrogance can stir a plague of mosquitoes to a boil, then every life-form must honor all the others, for its own sake and for the sake of the Web. So in the biblical vision, one crucial aspect of the universal harmony is responsiveness, the ability to look into the Other's face and see there what stirs justice.

Today, in our generation, we all face global corporations and international economic institutions that clearly have enormous power. Some believe that they place themselves beyond public accountability and that their policies endanger the earth, shatter the lives of children, enslave workers, turn the very water of life into a commodity too expensive for hundreds of millions. Others believe that their structures and behavior increase prosperity and freedom for most people.

Certainly they did not start out to be destructive...

Whom do these institutions represent? From where do they get their power?... In the economic/ecological sphere, as we have seen, the way that the Israelites [limited the power of the king and prevented their own tyrant pharaoh] was through the observances of the Sabbath rest not only on every seventh day, but also in the sabbatical seventh year, and (at least in prophetic demand) the seventh year plus one, the fiftieth year of Jubilee Home-bringing.

These rhythms limited, and periodically tried to dissolve, the amassing of wealth in the hands of particular families, and the use of the earth to do this. We often note with amazement the provisions (Lev. 25 and Deut. 15) for the sabbatical and Jubilee years, providing for periodic pauses in the process of amassing wealth and exploiting the earth; requiring the annulment of debt every seventh year; and requiring in every fiftieth year the total redistribution of land on an equal basis to every clan. These provisions (even though the Jubilee redistribution was actually done perhaps only once in biblical history) merit our astonishment and admiration.

Yet at the same time we must note that implicit in this rhythm is that a time of enrichment, a time to accumulate wealth, was also permitted — even encouraged. The Sabbatical-Jubilee pattern did not require continuous economic equality, the abolition of all hierarchy all the time. It limited hierarchy, rather than abolishing it. From generation to generation, a sense of community would be restored from whatever disparities of wealth and power had undermined it. Sustainable community, rhythmically renewed community — not absolute community.

Between sabbatical years, in "ordinary" history, there were also safeguards against too much accumulated wealth, too much "efficiency": the obligation to leave gleanings for the poor, to pay workers before the sun sets on their labor, to return a garment pledged to secure a loan if the worker needed it to keep warm or modest. (Deut. 24: 10-13)...

This sense of resistance to top-down unaccountable power and this search for ways to limit it was permanently encoded by the Rabbis as the ongoing central reason not only for the powerful celebration of the Passover festival but also for every festival and for the Sabbath...

Applying all this to the dangers of top-down unaccountable power at the global level, what might we create as the ancient Israelites created the rules to limit kingly power?

- Surely some way of rhythmically and periodically returning wealth and power to the wider community, dissolving hierarchies not forever but for a time of pausing, dissolving the guilt of the rich and the resentment of the poor — not perhaps forever but for a time of pausing. For in just this way were the sabbatical year of release and Jubilee intended to renew a measure of equality and community.
- Surely provision for transformative leaders like the ancient *shoftim*, "judges" in the conventional translations but in actuality men and women who were much more like charismatic leaders of the poor and the oppressed than they were like neutral figures perched high above the people.

- Surely provision not only for individual prophetic voices ready to challenge the pretensions of a king, but also prophetic communities- networks of criticism and resistance.
- Surely the creation of moments like the ancient pilgrimage festivals when the assembled power of the community as a whole, all its workers and all its citizens, would gather to recall the downfall of a Pharaoh and the joy of rest, reflection, and renewal...

In many spiritual traditions, the arrogance of unaccountable power is remembered not only as destructive to the material and socio-political well-being of the people but also to their spiritual health, their ability to achieve compassion, awareness, and a sense of meaning in their lives.

These teachings have helped inspire one of the most important threads of human effort over millennia: struggles to share power rather than bow to centralized control, efforts to win justice for workers and "ordinary folk," to encompass all with compassion, to protect the earth that embodies and nurtures all life.

These teachings have also contributed to a sense that all life is subtly intertwined and surcharged with meaning; that, for example, the exploitation of human beings — which would seem to happen in a realm separate from rivers, frogs, cattle, lice — in fact has an effect upon these beyond-human life forms. In many of our lives today, the same understanding might be expressed through words like "process," "reaping what you sow," "karma."

In either form, to be wise is to learn is that since all life is intertwined, loving what seems strange and separate is necessary to open up love for what is most familiar: "Love your neighbor as your self" is not merely a cautionary admonition but a "law of gravity" that stands alongside the law of restfulness. If we are able to love our neighbor, to love the stranger — then on balance, over time, not necessarily easily, we are more likely to receive love in response. If we pour contempt upon our neighbor, we are very likely to reap hatred in return. In its age-old struggle against Pharaoh, Jewish tradition goes out of its way to remind us that this struggle never ends. Every year we re-experience this ancient struggle, and every year the most powerful crystalline teaching of that memory — the Passover Haggadah — looks beyond its own memory of its own origins to speak directly to us its readers:

"In every generation, one rises up against us to destroy us."

And:

"In every generation, all human beings are obligated to look upon themselves as if they — we — not our forebears only — go forth from slavery."

* This paper has greatly benefited from the research of Lee Moore, project coordinator for The Shalom Center; the comments of Richard Kohl; and the reports of Antonia Juhasz, project director at International Forum on Globalization, San Francisco, info@democracyctr.org; Jim Shultz of The Democracy Center, San Francisco, www.democracyctr.org; David F. Waskow of the International Trade Division of Friends of the Earth; and Sarah Anderson, John Cavanaugh, Thea Lee, and the Institute for Policy Studies, Field Guide to the Global Economy (New Press, 2000).

Today, another pharaoh is the culture of consumption, progress, and busyness. Those who haven't yet broken free from the demands of such a culture are the enslaved.

In Russian, the word for busyness is *suyeta*, the same as for vanity. Indeed, busyness implies empty, unproductive spending of time, something like walking on a treadmill, only without the benefit of exercise—inconstant, but wholly unprofitable activity. "Busyness" is a modern concept. The word entered the English language around 1850, first in a lighthearted sense, more appropriate to a description of squirrels, which always seemed to be doing something, even when, from our viewpoint, nothing needed to be done (as in "bright brisk busyness of the squirrel"—one of the earliest instances cited by the *OED*). Now that we apply the word to ourselves, it refers less to the state of being cheerfully occupied than that of being restless and preoccupied, which we naturally treat as a much more serious business—a justifiable cause for complaint and a reason for malaise. If only we had more time...

--from "When the Sky Is the Limit: Busyness in Contemporary American Society" by Liah Greenfeld, in *Social Research: An International Quarterly*; Issue: Volume 72, Number 2; Summer 2005, pp. 315-338.

"Slow movements" such as slow food and voluntary simplicity are gaining ground in the United States and around the world, in response to time poverty and the overwork epidemic. Busyness is expected of working adults, and seriousness and success are assumed to be only for those who work or go to school "full time." Those who voluntarily work part-time or refuse promotions in order to keep their career responsibilities minimal are considered lazy or mediocre employees and students.

Stress is now anticipated as something to be "managed," and many Americans, though they may have hundreds of friends on Facebook, feel isolated and disconnected from their communities. We all crave relationships—true connection to friends and family, our communities and cities, even our food, and most of all to our lives, which seem engulfed with tasks instead of relationships.

Instead of "creating time," much of the technology we use has weakened our connections to each other. We are now less connected to our lives and work, despite our many time and labor-saving devices. Instead of spending less time working, we fill our already overscheduled days with more hectic activities and rush from task to task, in and outside of work. Though few people in the middle class, at least, would call themselves "wage slaves," they feel more comfortable describing themselves as imprisoned to their mortgages and consumer debt, and careers. How many of us have little or no identity outside of our employment? Our very self is related to what we do to "make a living." Of course, we chose to buy the car and home, but our decisions were affected by school districts and public transportation availability in our communities. However, instead of considering whether we have the car as transportation to the job, consider whether the job is required because of the car. It may be a causality dilemma, but contemplating choices is necessary to make real change, both public and private.

Aramee Oved Avi - אָרַמֵּי אֲבִי אֲבִי
or "My Ancestor Was A Wandering Jew"

Go and Learn - יֵאָמֵר וְלָמַד

צא ולמד, מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב אביו. שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ולבן בקש לעקר את הפל, שנאמר:

Tzei ul'mad, mah bikeish lavan ha-arami la-asot l'ya-akov avinu. She-paroh lo gazar ela al haz'charim, v'lavan bikeish la-akor et hakol, shene-emar:

Go and learn: Note well that Lavan the Aramean intended ultimately to kill our ancestor Jacob, after he trapped him into working for his wives and flocks for 20 years. Even Pharaoh only intended to kill the male children, while Lavan intended to annihilate all of Jacob's family, bringing the Jewish People to an end.

The Torah Story of Slavery and Redemption

ארמי אבי אבי, ויירד מצר, ויהי שם לגוי גדול, עצום ורב: (Dt. 26:5)

Arami oveid avi, vayeired mitzraymah, vayagor sham bimtei m'at. Vay'hi sham l'goy gadol, atzum varav.

Go and learn: "A wandering Aramean was my father, who went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number. And there we multiplied becoming a great people, strong and numerous. But the Egyptians deal ill with us and afflicted us, setting us to hard labor. Finally, when we cried out to G-d, the G-d of our ancestors, G-d heard our voice, saw our affliction, saw our toil and our oppression. Then G-d brought us out from Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; with great awe, marvelous signs and with wonders." (Dt. 26:5)

ויירד מצר, ויהי שם לגוי גדול.

Vayeired mitzraymah. Anus al pi hadibur.

He went down to Egypt, compelled by divine decree.

ויגר שם. מלמד ש לא ירד יעקב אביו להשתקע במצרים, אלא לגור שם, שנאמר: ויאמרו אל-פרעה, לגור בארץ מצרים, כי אין מרעה לצאן אשר לעבדך, כי כבד הרעב בארץ כנען. ועתה, יש-בניא עבדך בארץ גושן:

Vayagorsham. M'lameid shelo yarad ya-akov avinu l'hishtakei-a b'mitzrayim, ela lagur sham, shene-emar: vayomru el paroh, lagur ba-arets banu, ki ein mireh latzon asher la-a-vadecha, ki chaveid hara-av b'erezt k'na-an. V'atah, yeish'vu na avadecha b'erezt goshen.

He sojourned there implies that he did not come down to settle in Egypt but only to live there temporarily, as it is written: "They (the sons of Jacob) said to Pharaoh: 'We have come to sojourn in this land because there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. For now, though, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.' "

במתי מעט. כמה שנאמר: בשבעים נפש, ירדו אבותיך מצר, ויהי שם לגוי גדול, ככוכבי השמים לרב.

Bimtei m'at. K'mah shene-emar: b'shivim nefesh, yar'du avotecha mitzray'mah. V'atah, sam'cha Adonai elohecha, k'choch'vei hashamayim larov.

Few in number, as it is written: "With seventy souls your ancestors went down to Egypt, and now G-d has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky."

ויהי שם לגוי. מלמד ש יהיו ישראל מציינים שם:

Vay'hi sham l'goy. M'lameid shehayu yisra-eil m'tzuyanim sham.

There he became a nation means that they became a distinct people in Egypt.

גָּדוֹל עֲצוּמִים, כִּמְהַ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ, וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ, בְּמַאֲד מְאֹד, וְתֵלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם:

Gadol atzum. *K'mah shene-emar: uv'nei yisra-eil, paru vayishr'tzu, vayirbu vaya - atzmu, bimod m'od, vatimalei ha-aretz otam.*

Great, mighty, as it is written. "The children of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and became mighty, and the land was full of them."

וְרַב. כִּמְהַ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: רַבְּבָה כִּי צִמַח הַשָּׂדֶה נְתַתִּיךָ, וְתִרְבִּי, וְתִגְדְּלִי, וְתִבְאִי בְעֵדֵי עֵדֵיִים: שֵׁדִים נִכְוִנוּ, וְשֵׁ עֶרְךָ צִמְחָה, וְאֵת יַעֲרִים וְעֶרְיָה:

Varav. *K'mah shene-emar: R'vavah k'tzemach ha-sadeh n'tatich, vatirbi, vatigd'li, vatavo-i ba-adi adayim. Shadayim nachonu, us'areich tzimei-ach, v'at eirom v'eryah.*

And numerous, as it is written: "I made you as populous as the plants of the field; you grew up and wore choice adornments; your breasts were firm and your hair grew long; yet, you were bare and naked." "The Egyptians suspected us of evil and afflicted us; they imposed hard labor upon us."

וַיַּרְעוּ אֶת־נוֹ הַמִּצְרִים וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה:

Vayarei-u otanu hamitzrim vay'anunu, Vayit'nu aleinu avodah kashah.

"The Egyptians treat us badly. They persecuted us and imposed hard labor on us." (Dt. 26:6)

וַיַּרְעוּ אֶת־נוֹ הַמִּצְרִים. כִּמְהַ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִבֵּה נְתַחֲפֶמָה לוֹ. פִּי־רַבְּבָה, וְהָיָה כִּי־יִתְקַרְאָנָה מִלְחָמָה, וְנוֹסְפָה הוּא עַל־שִׁנְאֵינוּ, וְנִלְחַם־בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ:

Vayarei-u otanu hamitzrim. *K'mah shene-emar: havah nitchak'mah lo, pen yirbeh, v'hayah ki tikrenah milchamah, v'nosaf gam hu al soneinu, v'nilcham banu v'alah min ha-aretz.*

And they afflicted us, as it is written: "They set taskmasters over them in order to oppress them with their burdens; the people of Israel built Pithom and Raamses as store-cities for Pharaoh."

וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. כִּמְהַ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּשְׂימוּ עָלֵינוּ שָׂרֵי מִסִּים, לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוּ בְסִבְלָתָם: וַיִּבְנוּ עָרֵי מִסְכָּנוֹת לְפָרְעֹה, אֶת־פִּתּוֹם וְאֶת־רַעַמְסֵס:

Vay'anunu. *K'mah shene-emar: vayasimu alav sarei misim, l'ma-an anoto b'sivlotam, va-yiven arei misk'not l'faroh, et pitom v'et raamseis.*

And afflicted us, as it is written: "They set taskmasters over them in order to oppress them with their burdens; the people of Israel built Pithom and Raamses as storecities for Pharaoh."

וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כִּמְהַ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָרְךָ:

Vayit'nu aleinu avodah kashah. *K'mah shene-emar: vaya-avidu mitzrayim et b'nei yisra-eil b'farech.*

They imposed hard labor upon us, as it is written: "They imposed back-breaking labor upon the people of Israel."

וַיִּצְעַק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע יְיָ אֶת־קוֹלֵנוּ, וַיִּרְא אֶת־עֵינֵינוּ, וְאֶת־עַמְלָנוּ, וְאֶת־לַחֲצֵנוּ:

Vanitzak el Adonai elohei avoteinu, vayishma Adonai et koleinu, vayar et on'yeinu, v'et amaleinu, v'et lachatzeinu.

"We cried to G-d of our ancestors; G-d heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression." (Dt. 26:6)

וַיִּצְעַק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, כִּמְהַשְׁנֵאֲמַר: וַיְהִי בִּימֵי הָרַבִּים הָהֵם, וַיָּמָת מִלֶּךְ מִצְרַיִם, וַיֵּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֶבְרָה וַיִּזְעֻקוּ. וְתַעֲלֶה שְׁוֹעַתְם אֶל־הַאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֶבְרָה:

Vanitzak el Adonai elohei avoteinu. *K'mah shene-emar: vay'hi va-yamim harabim ha-heim, va-yamot melech mitzrayim, va-yei-an'chu v'nei yisra-eil min ha-avodah vayizaku. Vata-al shavatam el ha-Elohim min ha-avodah.*

We cried to the G-d of our ancestors, as it is written: "It happened in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died; the children of Israel sighed because of their labor and cried; their cry of servitude reached G-d."

וַיִּשְׁמַע יְיָ אֶת־קוֹלֵנוּ. כִּמְהַשְׁנֵאֲמַר: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהֵים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ, אֶת־אֲבֹרָהֶם, אֶת־יִצְחָק, וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב:

G-d heard our cry, as it is written: "G-d heard their groaning; G-d remembered G-d's covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."

וַיִּרְא אֶת־עֲנִיּוֹנוֹ: זֶה הָיָה דַרְךְ אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. כִּמְהַשְׁנֵאֲמַר: וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהֵים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיִּדַע אֱלֹהֵים: Vayar et on'yeinu. *Zo p'rishut derech eretz. K'mah shene-emar: vayar Elohim et b'nei yisra-eil. vayeida Elohim.*

And saw our affliction, that is, the conjugal separation of husband and wife, as it is written: "G-d saw the children of Israel, and G-d knew."

וְאֶת־עַמְלֵנוּ. אֵלֶּי הַבָּנִים. כִּמְהַשְׁנֵאֲמַר: כֹּל־הַבָּנִים הַיּוֹדֵי הָיָה לֹד הָיָה תִּשְׁלַיְכֵהוּ, וְכָל־הַבָּתִּים חַיִּין: V'et amaleinu. *Eilu ha-banim. Kmah shene-emar: kol habein hayilod hay'orah tashlichu-hu, v'chol-habat t'chayun.*

Our toil refers to the drowning of the sons, as it is written: "Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, but you shall let every daughter live."

וְאֶת לַחַצְזֵינוּ. זֶה הַדְּחָק. כִּמְהַשְׁנֵאֲמַר: וְגַם־רָא יָתִי אֶת־הַלְחָץ, אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לַחַצְזֵים אֵתָם: V'et lachatzeinu. *Zeh had'chak. K'mah shene-emar: v'gam ra-iti et ha-lachatz, asher mitzrayim lochatzim otam.*

Our oppression means the pressure used upon them, as it is written: "I have also seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them."

וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה, וּבַמָּוֶל גָּדוֹל וּבְאֵתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים:

Vayotzi-einu Adonai mimitzrayim, *b'yad chazakah, uvizroa n'tuyah, uv'mora gadol uv'otot uv'mof'tim.* "G-d brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great awe, miraculous signs and wonders." (Dt. 26:8)

וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא עַל־יְדֵי מְלָאכָה, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שָׂרָף. וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שְׁלֵיחַ. אֲלֵּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּכַבּוֹדוֹ וּבְעֲצוּמוֹ. שְׁנֵאֲמַר: וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה, וְהִפְתִּי כְלַב־כּוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, מֵאָדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה, וּבְכָל־אֵל הִי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים אֵינִי:

Vayotzi-einu Adonai mimitzrayim. *Lo al ydei malach, v'lo al y'dei saraf. V'lo al y'dei shali-ach. Ela hakadosh Baruch hu bichvodo uv'atzmo. Shene-emar: v'avarti v'erezt mitzrayim ba-laylah hazeh, v'hikeiti chol b'chor b'erezt mitzrayim, mei-adam v'ad b'heimah, uv'chol elohei mitzrayim e-eseh sh'fatim ani Adonai.*

G-d brought us out of Egypt not by an angel, not by a seraph, not by a messenger, but by G-dself, as it is written: "I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night; I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt from man unto beast; on all the G-ds of Egypt I will execute judgments; I am G-d."

וְעָבַרְתִּי בַּבָּאֵרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, אֲנִי וְלֹא מַלְאָךְ. וְהִכֵּיתִי כָל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם. אֲנִי וְלֹא שַׂרְף. וּבְכָל-אֶלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים, אֲנִי וְלֹא הַשָּׁלִיחַ. אֲנִי יי. אֲנִי הוּא וְלֹא אֲחֵר: (Ex. 12:12)
V'avarti v'erezt mitzrayim balaylah hazeh, ani v'lo malach. V'hikeiti cholb'chor b'erezt mitzrayim. ani v'lo saraf. Uv'chol elohei mitzrayim e-eseh sh'fatim, ani v'lo hashali-ach. Ani Adonai. Ani hu v'lo acheir.

"I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night," myself and not an angel; "I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt," myself and not a seraph; "on all the G-ds of Egypt I will execute judgments," myself and not a messenger; "I am G-d," I and none other. (Ex. 12:12)

בַּיָּד חֲזָקָה. זוֹ הַדָּבָר. כִּמְהָ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הַנֵּה יַד־יְיָ הוֹיָה, בְּמִקְנֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה, בַּסּוּסִים בַּחֲמֹרִים בַּגְּמֵלִים, בַּבָּקָר וּבַצֹּאן, דָּבָר כְּבִד מְאֹד:
B'yad chazakah. Zo ha-dever. K'mah shene-emar: hineih yad Adonai hoyah, b'mikn'cha asher basadeh, basusim bachamorim bag'malim, babakar uvatzon, dever kaveid m'od.

Mighty hand refers to the disease among the cattle, as it is written: "Behold the hand of G-d strikes your cattle which are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks--a very severe pestilence."

וּבְזָרְעַ נְטוּיָה. זוֹ הַחֶרֶב. כִּמְהָ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְחָרְבוּ שְׁלוֹפָה בַּיָּדוֹ, נְטוּיָה עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַיִם:
Uvizroa n'tuyah. Zo ha-cherav. K'mah shene-emar: v'charbo sh'lufah b'yado, n'tuyah al y'rushalayim.

Outstretched arm means the sword, as it is written: "G-d's drawn sword in G-d's hand, outstretched over Jerusalem."

וּבְמוֹרָא גָדוֹל, זֶה גִּלְיֵי שְׁכִינָה. כִּמְהָ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: אוֹ הַנֶּסֶף אֶל־הַיָּם, לְבוֹא לְקַחַת לּוֹ גּוֹי מִקֵּרֶב גּוֹי, בַּמִּסּוֹת בְּאֵתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה, וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזָרוּעַ נְטוּיָה, וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדֻלִים. כִּכֹּל אֲשֶׁר-רָעִשָׂה לְכֶם יי אֶל־הַיָּם בַּמִּצְרַיִם, לְעֵינֶיךָ:
Uv'mora gadol. Zeh giluy sh'chinah. K'mah shene-emar: o hanisah Elohim, lavo lakachat lo goy mikerev goy, b'masot b'otot uv'mof'tim uv'milchamah, uv'yad chazakah uvizroa n'tuyah, uv'moraim g'dolim. K'chol asher asah lachem Adonai eloheichem b'mitzrayim, l'einecha.

Great awe alludes to the divine revelation, as it is written: "Has G-d ever attempted to take unto G-dself, a nation from the midst of another nation by trials, miraculous signs and wonders, by war and with a mighty hand and outstretched arm and by awesome revelations, just as you saw your G-d do for you in Egypt, before your eyes?"

וּבְאֵתוֹת. זֶה הַמִּטָּה, כִּמְהָ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאֵת הַמִּטָּה הַזֶּה תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ. אֲשֶׁר תִּעֲשֶׂה-בּוֹ אֶת-הָאֵתוֹת: וּבְמוֹפְתִים. זֶה הַדָּם. כִּמְהָ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְנָתַתִּי מוֹפְתִים, בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ
Uv'otot. Zeh hamateh, k'mah shene-emar: v'et hamateh hazeh tikach b'yadecha, asher ta-aseh bo et ha-otot.

Miraculous signs refers to the miracles performed with the staff of Moses, as it is written: "Take this staff in your hand, that you may perform the miraculous signs with it."

עֲשֶׂר מַכּוֹת / Eser Makot / Ten Plagues

אלו עשר מכות שֶׁהִבִּיא הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל־הֵם צָרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:
Eilu eser makot sheheivi hakadosh Baruch hu al hamitzrim b'mitzrayim, v'eilu hein:
 These are the Plagues that G-d brought upon Egypt.
 [Since our "cup of joy" cannot be regarded as full when we recall the suffering of the Egyptians, a drop of wine is removed from the cup with the mention of each plague.]

דָּם. צְפַרְדֵּי. עַנְיִם. עֲרוּב. דִּבְרֵי. שְׁחִין. בַּרָד. אֲרֵבָה.
 חִשָּׁן. מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת:



The planet has entered its own time of plague or pestilence. The plagues listed here as being wrought upon the Egyptians sound familiar. As we have hardened our hearts against the pleas of the Earth, she has experienced afflictions due to our actions.

1. Water into blood: Exodus 7:20-21

And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.

And the fish that were in the river died; and the river became foul, and the Egyptians could not drink water from the river; and the blood was throughout all the land of Egypt.

כִּי וַיַּעַשׂוּ כֵן מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה, וַיִּלְחָם בַּמַּטֵּה וַיַּךְ אֶת־הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר, לְעֵינֵי פְרָעֹה,
 וּלְעֵינֵי עַבְדָּיו; וַיִּהְיֶה כָּל־הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּאֵר, לְדָם.

כא וְהַדְגָה אֶשְׁר־בַּיָּאֵר מִתְּהָ, וַיִּבְאֵשׁ הָיָאֵר, וְלֹא-יִכְלוּ מִצְרַיִם, לִשְׂתוֹת מַיִם מִן-הָיָאֵר; וַיְהִי הַדָּם, בְּכָל-
אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.

While the waters of our planet have not turned to blood, they have sometimes turned red due to human activity. Red tides, or harmful algal blooms, can be caused by excessive microorganism populations allowed by uncontrolled waste effluent of all types, including human, agricultural, and industrial pollutants. (“Phytoplankton Blooms: The Basics.” Nancy Diersing, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; May 2009) More importantly, all our waterways are troubled, and pollution is caused by human behaviors. Humans add pathogens, chemicals, and even “thermal pollution” to our most important resource. Everyone depends upon the Earth’s water supply, and pollutants released in one body of water are quickly found in another. Five giant “islands” of (toxin-absorbing, plastic) trash can be found in the world’s oceans. (“Afloat in the Ocean, Expanding Islands of Trash.” *The New York Times*, November 10, 2009, Section D; Column 0; Science Desk; Pg. 2, 911 words, By Lindsey Hoshaw.) The World Health Organization estimates that annually, approximately 1.6 million people die from diarrheal diseases due to a lack of clean water and sanitation. (*World Health Report 2008 2*) 1.1 billion people worldwide have no access to a safe, reliable, and clean water source, and 2.6 billion lack access to appropriate sanitation. (UN Millennium Project 2005. *Health, Dignity, and Development: What Will it Take?* Task Force on Water and Sanitation. p. 3.)

2. Frogs: Exodus 7:26-29

And the LORD spoke unto Moses: 'Go in unto Pharaoh, and say unto him: Thus saith the LORD: Let My people go, that they may serve Me.

And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs.

And the river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into thy house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs.

And the frogs shall come up both upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.'

כּו וַיִּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, בֹּא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה; וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, שְׁלַח אֶת-עַמִּי, וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי.
כז וְאִם-מָאֵן אֲתָה, לִשְׁלַח: הִנֵּה אֲנִי, נֹגֵף אֶת-כָּל-גְּבוּלְךָ--בַּצְּפָרַדִּים.
כח וְשַׂרְץ הָיָאֵר, צְפָרַדִּים עִים, וְעָלוּ וַבָּאוּ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבַחֲדָר מִשְׁכַּבְךָ וְעַל-מִטְתְּךָ; וּבְבַיִת עַבְדֶּיךָ וּבְעַמְּךָ,
וּבְתַנּוּרֶיךָ וּבְמִשְׁאָרֹתֶיךָ.
כט וּבְכֹה וּבְעַמְּךָ, וּבְכָל-עַבְדֶּיךָ--יָעִלוּ, הַצְּפָרַדִּים עִים.

Pharaoh and the Egyptians were overrun with frogs during this plague. Today, frog populations are declining at an alarming rate; amphibians are endangered and disappearing perhaps more quickly than any other type of animal. Frogs are considered good biological indicators of the health of their ecosystem; that is, their health reflects the health of their habitat; what happens to frogs now, will happen to all the links in the web of life eventually. (Kathryn Phillips, *Tracking the Vanishing Frogs*, 11) Vanishing amphibian populations foretell species extinction throughout the food chain.

“Amphibians are more threatened and are declining more rapidly than either birds or mammals. Although many declines are due to habitat loss and overutilization, other, unidentified processes threaten 48% of rapidly declining

species and are driving species most quickly to extinction. Declines are nonrandom in terms of species' ecological preferences, geographic ranges, and taxonomic associations and are most prevalent among Neotropical montane, stream-associated species. The lack of conservation remedies for these poorly understood declines means that hundreds of amphibian species now face extinction."

--From "Status and Trends of Amphibian Declines and Extinctions Worldwide," *Science*, Volume 306; December 3, 2004; p. 1783.

Lice: Exodus 8:16-19

So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'"

17 And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. 19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of G-d." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.

טז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, הֲשִׁיבֵם בְּבִקְרֹה וְהִתִּיצַב לִפְנֵי פְרַעֲהוֹ--הַנֶּה, יוֹצֵא הֵם יִמָּה; וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, שֹׁלַח עִמִּי, וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי.
יז כִּי יֵאמְרוּ אֵינְךָ, מִשֹּׁלַח אֶת-עַמִּי--הַנְּנִי מִשִּׁלְּחַן בְּרַבְעַבְדֶּיךָ וּבְעַמִּיךָ וּבְבֵתְךָ, אֶת-הָעֶרֶב; וּמָלְאוּ בֵתֵי מִצְרַיִם, אֶת-הָעֶרֶב, וְגַם הָאָדָמָה, אֲשֶׁר-הֵם עָלֶיהָ.
יח וְהִפְלִיתִי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת-אַרְצְךָ גֹּשֶׁן, אֲשֶׁר עִמִּי עַד עַלְיָהּ, לְבֵלֵת יְהוּיֹתֶם-שָׁם, עֶרֶב-לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּ, כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּקִרְבְּ הָאָרֶץ.
יט וְשִׁמְתִי פִדְתִּי בַּיּוֹם עִמִּי וּבֵין עַמִּיךָ; לְמַחֵר יְהִי, הָאֵת הַזֶּה.

Climate change has affected populations of parasites like lice, bed bugs, and mosquitoes, which carry malaria. Over a million humans die from malaria each year, and most of those deaths are among African children.

A 2006 study showed that a warming trend in the East African highlands from 1950 to 2002 exacerbated malarial disease incidence. The research, published by Jonathan A. Patz and Sarah H. Olson and funded by Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE), The Nelson Institute and Department of Population Health Sciences, University of Wisconsin, indicated that "the biological response of mosquito populations to warming can be more than an order of magnitude larger than the measured change in temperature," an argument against those who believe small shifts in temperature are not worrisome, as "a mere half-degree centigrade increase in temperature trend can translate into a 30–100% increase in mosquito abundance, in other words "biological amplification" of temperature effects. In the African highlands, where mosquito populations are relatively low compared with lowland areas, such biological responses may be especially significant to determining the risk of malaria." Furthermore, malarial infection is "exacerbated by rapid population growth and massive land use changes (such as deforestation) that can favor mosquito breeding," which are other environmental effects on the spread of malaria. Of course, issues such as "poor access to effective health care and inefficient vector control measures" make the problem worse. "At the international level, industrialized nations must confront the deleterious health effects that their greenhouse gas emissions

(causing global warming) are having around the world.” (Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2006 April 11; 103(15): 5635–5636. Published online 2006 April 4. doi: 10.1073/pnas.0601493103.)

Flies: Exodus 8:16-20

And the Lord said to Moses, "Arise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, behold, he is going out to the water, and you shall say to him, 'So said the Lord, "Let My people go out and serve Me. For if you do not let My people go, behold, I will incite against you and against your servants and against your people and in your houses a mixture of noxious creatures, and the houses of Egypt will be filled with the mixture of noxious creatures, as well as the land upon which they are. And I will separate on that day the land of Goshen, upon which My people stand, that there will be no mixture of noxious creatures there, in order that you know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. And I will make a redemption between My people and your people; this sign will come about tomorrow." ' ' ' The Lord did so, and a heavy mixture of noxious creatures came to Pharaoh's house and his servants' house, and throughout the entire land of Egypt, the land was destroyed because of the mixture of noxious creatures.

טז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, הַשְׂכֵּם בַּבֹּקֶר וְהִתִּיצַב לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה--הֲנֵה, יוֹצֵא הֵם יְמָה;
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, שֶׁלַח עַמִּי, וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי.
יז כִּי אִם-אֵינְךָ, מִשְׁלַח אֶת-עַמִּי--הֲנִי מִשְׁלִיחַ בְּךָ וּבַעֲבָדֶיךָ וּבַעַמִּי, וּבְבֵתֶיךָ, אֶת-
הָעֶרְב; וּמָלְאוּ בֵתֵי מִצְרַיִם, אֶת-הָעֶרְב, וְגַם הָאֲדָמָה, אֲשֶׁר-רָהֵם עָלֶיהָ.
יח וְהִפְלִיתִי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת-אֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן, אֲשֶׁר עַמִּי עֹמֵד עָלֶיהָ, לְבֵלֵת יְהוּיֹת-שָׂם, עֶרְב-
לְמַעַן תִּדְעַ, כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּקִרְבְּ הָאֶרֶץ.
יט וְשָׂמַתִּי פְדֹתַי, בַּיּוֹם עַמִּי וּבֵין עַמִּי; לְמַחֵר יְהִי, הָאֵת הַזֶּה.
כ וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה, כִּן, וַיִּבְאֵר עֶרְבַב כַּבֹּד, בַּיּוֹם הַפְּרָעָה וּבֵית עַבְדָּיו; וּבְכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
תִּשְׁחַת הָאֶרֶץ, מִפְּנֵי הָעֶרְב.

The fourth plague of Egypt was Arov (עֶרֶב). Commentaries sometimes interpret this word as flies, sometimes as beasts, (which are both capable of harming people and livestock). The word עֶרֶב has caused a difference of opinion; the root meaning is related to mixing. Most traditional interpreters understand the plague as 'wild animals', but many modern commentators understand the plague as a swarm of flies.

Most of us live in areas where pests like flies and gnats are manageable, if not completely eradicated. The idea of a plague or swarm of flies is almost unthinkable. However, this may not always be the case, and hasn't been over the last decade in the United Kingdom. Industrial egg farms, landfill management, and "unusually" warm temperatures are to blame for plagues of flies in the UK; the BBC website documents remarkable fly infestations in 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2009. Scientists have warned that the worst may be to come; a press release published on October 3, 2005 by the British Ecological Society cautions:

In 75 years' time, the UK could be plagued by fly populations 250% up on today's levels if forecasts of climate change prove accurate, ecologists have warned. Writing in a special climate change issue of the British Ecological Society's Journal of Applied Ecology, Dave Goulson and colleagues from the

University of Southampton found that if the worst case scenario for climate change occurs - a 5 deg C rise in temperature by 2080 - house fly numbers in the UK could explode...

Until now, ecologists have been less keen to study flies, but says Dr Goulson: "The annoyance and public health risks associated with large populations of flies are considerable, and potential increases in their abundance as a result of climate change are a cause for concern."...

According to Dr. Goulson: "Our study demonstrates that calyptrate flies are likely to be among the species that respond positively to a warming climate: population fluctuations were strongly determined by weather and we predict that small increases in temperature can lead to major increases in fly density." The results are important because they show how climate change could impact on disease in the UK. The adults of many species of calyptrate flies feed on human food as well as refuse and excrement and therefore act as important disease vectors. Up to 10 million flies can emerge from just 1 ha of household waste.

A BBC article on the study states:

A rise in the fly population could lead to a greater incidence of fly-borne disease, such as stomach upset and diarrhoea.

The most common cause of diarrhoea in Britain is *Campylobacter*, a family of bacteria.

According to figures from the Health Protection Agency, the number of cases has risen significantly in recent years, from 28,761 in 1988 to 46,178 in 2003. Flies are thought to transmit the bacteria, either by carrying small quantities of contaminated material on their bodies or by regurgitating or defecating on to food.

Research published earlier this year showed a strong correlation between the reproductive rate of flies and the incidence of *Campylobacter* infection.

Nature does provide controls on flies and bluebottles, such as spiders and swallows; but Dave Goulson does not believe their populations would be able to increase enough to keep the flies down.

"There are things that we can do though," he said, "such as covering food in the summer, and taking more care with barbecues and so on.

"The other thing is that a lot of flies breed in organic waste which people throw away into their dustbins. If more people composted, the amount of that waste would be reduced."

Two years ago a World Health Organization study concluded that, globally, climate change has the potential to affect the health of millions; for example, through the spread of disease-carrying insects.

--from "Climate to increase British flies," by Richard Black, Environment Correspondent, BBC News website; published October 3, 2005.

A plague of flies sounds like a nuisance, or a scene in a horror movie. In reality, it could mean thousands of deaths per year from disease.

Cattle Plague: Exodus 9:1-7

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD G-d of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them, behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe pestilence. And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel.'"" Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go.

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, בֹּא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה; וְדַבַּרְתָּ אֵלָיו, כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים, שְׁלַח אֶת-
עַמִּי, וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי.
ב כִּי אִם-מָאֵן אַתָּה, לִשְׁלַחַם, וְעוֹדֶרְךָ, מִחֲזִיק בָּם.
ג הִנֵּה יַד-יְהוָה הוֹיָה, בְּמִקְנֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה, בַּסּוּסִים בְּחֲמֹרִים בַּגְּמֵלִים, בַּבָּקָר וּבְצֹאֵן-דְּבָר, כִּכְבֹּד
מֵאֲדָם.
ד וְהָפְלָה יְהוָה--בֵּין מִקְנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבֵין מִקְנֵה מִצְרַיִם; וְלֹא יָמוּת מִכֹּל-לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, דְּבָר.
ה וַיֵּשׂם יְהוָה, מוֹעֵד לְאֹמֶר: מִחָר, יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה--בְּאֶרֶץ.
ו וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה, מִמִּחְרָת, וַיָּמָת, כֹּל מִקְנֵה מִצְרַיִם; וּמִמֶּנּוּ קָנָה בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְאִמְתֵּי אֶחָד.
ז וַיִּשְׁלַח פַּרְעֹה--וְהִנֵּה לְאִמְתֵּי מִמֶּנּוּ קָנָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, עַד-אֶחָד; וַיִּכְבַּד לִב פַּרְעֹה, וְלֹא שְׁלַח אֶת-הָעָם.
{פ}

The Egyptians experienced, in the fifth plague, the death of their livestock. Agricultural animals such as cattle would have been used in farming and for food, thus were valuable for human use. In the current ecological crisis, animals and plants that are not seen as useful for humans, suffer. Species that are eaten by humans are at little likelihood of extinction, but most others are seen as "on the brink." Human activities, especially encroachment on natural habitats, have significantly altered the numbers of animals in the wild.

A majority of the nation's biologists are convinced that a "mass extinction" of plants and animals is underway that poses a major threat to humans in the next century, yet most Americans are only dimly aware of the problem, a poll says. The rapid disappearance of species was ranked as one of the planet's gravest environmental worries, surpassing pollution, global warming and the thinning of the ozone layer, according to the survey of 400 scientists commissioned by New York's American Museum of Natural History. The poll's release yesterday comes on the heels of a groundbreaking study of plant diversity that concluded that at least one in eight known plant species is threatened with extinction. Although scientists are divided over the specific numbers, many believe that the rate of loss is greater now than at any time in history. "The speed at which species are being lost is much faster than any we've seen in the past -- including those [extinctions] related to meteor collisions," said Daniel Simberloff, a University of Tennessee ecologist and prominent expert in biological diversity who participated in the museum's survey. [Note: the last

mass extinction caused by a meteor collision was that of the dinosaurs, 65 million years ago.]

Most of his peers apparently agree. Nearly seven out of 10 of the biologists polled said they believed a "mass extinction" was underway, and an equal number predicted that up to one-fifth of all living species could disappear within 30 years. Nearly all attributed the losses to human activity, especially the destruction of plant and animal habitats.

--from "Mass Extinction Underway, Majority of Biologists Say," *Washington Post*; Tuesday, April 21, 1998, Joby Warrick

A 2009 press release ("Extinction crisis continues apace,") from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature indicates the extent of the current mass extinction, called the holocene extinction, which is considered to be anthropocene (human-caused).

The latest update of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ shows that 17,291 species out of the 47,677 assessed species are threatened with extinction.

The results reveal 21 percent of all known mammals, 30 percent of all known amphibians, 12 percent of all known birds, and 28 percent of reptiles, 37 percent of freshwater fishes, 70 percent of plants, 35 percent of invertebrates assessed so far are under threat...

Of the world's 5,490 mammals, 79 are Extinct or Extinct in the Wild, with 188 Critically Endangered, 449 Endangered and 505 Vulnerable...

The IUCN Red List shows that 1,895 of the planet's 6,285 amphibians are in danger of extinction, making them the most threatened group of species known to date. Of these, 39 are already Extinct or Extinct in the Wild, 484 are Critically Endangered, 754 are Endangered and 657 are Vulnerable...

Of the 12,151 plants on the IUCN Red List, 8,500 are threatened with extinction, with 114 already Extinct or Extinct in the Wild...

Though the average person is unable to travel to the rainforests in order to physically protect endangered species there, many of the plants and animals that are under threat are less "exciting" than polar bears and whales, thus receive less attention in the press.

One action people can do to help save local plants and animals that face extinction is to raise awareness and, in some cases, create a market for the goods of such plants and (rarely) animals. Counterintuitive as it may seem, sometimes the best way to save an endangered species is to eat it. These endangered species were once common, but since the introduction of industrial agriculture (and with it, extreme monoculture farming), their numbers have faded.

Gary Paul Nabhan, author of *Renewing America's Food Traditions: Saving and Savoring the Continent's Most Endangered Foods*, "has spent most of the past four years compiling a list of endangered plants and animals that were once fairly commonplace in American kitchens but are now threatened, endangered or essentially extinct in the marketplace. He has set out to save them, which often involves urging people to eat them." Obviously, this works only with a certain type of endangered species. "The idea of eater-based conservation, which holds that to save something, one has to eat it, works well for agricultural products and some wild foods like clams that benefit from regular harvesting." You may be able to assist in the re-emergence of disappearing heirloom foods by visiting your local farmer's market this summer. Though this

attitude toward conservation fails to treat the plants and animals as inherently valuable, it has worked for such plants as Ojai pixie tangerines, Sonoma County Gravenstein apples, the Makah ozette potato, and the moon and stars watermelon. (“An Unlikely Way to Save a Species: Serve It for Dinner,” *The New York Times*; April 30, 2008)

Boils: Exodus 9:8-12

So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

ח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאַל-אַהֲרֹן, קַחוּ לָכֶם מִלֵּא חַפְנֵיכֶם, פַּיִחַ כַּבֵּשֶׂן; וּזְרְקוּ
מֹשֶׁה הַשָּׁמַיְמָה, לְעֵינֵי פְרָעֹה.
ט וְהָיָה לְאַבְקָה, עַל כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם; וְהָיָה עַל-הָאָדָם וְעַל-הַבְּהֵמָה, לִשְׁחִין פֶּרֶחַ
אַבְעֵב עֹת--בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם.
י וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-פַּיִחַ הַכַּבֵּשֶׂן, וַיִּעַמְדוּ לִפְנֵי פְרָעֹה, וַיִּזְרְקוּ אֹתוֹ מֹשֶׁה, הַשָּׁמַיְמָה; וְהָיָה,
שְׁחִין אַבְעֵב עֹת, פֶּרֶחַ, בְּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה.
יא וְלֹא-יָקְלוּ הַחֲרָטָמַיִם, לְעַמֵּד לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה--מִפְּנֵי הַשְׁחִין: כִּי-הָיָה הַשְׁחִין,
בְּחֲרָטָמָם וּבְכָל-מִצְרָיִם.
יב וַיַּחֲזֵק יְהוָה אֶת-לֵב פְּרָעֹה, וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵהֶם: כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה. {ס}

The Egyptians suffered ill health (in the form of boils that would not heal) as a result of their Pharaoh’s decision to enslave the Israelites. Because humans have enslaved the earth, polluting it in spite of relying on it for life, we too are beginning to suffer the health effects. One of the World Health Organization’s “key facts” on health and climate change is “Many of the major killers such as diarrhoeal diseases, malnutrition, malaria and dengue are highly climate-sensitive and are expected to worsen as the climate changes.”

Climatic conditions strongly affect water-borne diseases and diseases transmitted through insects, snails or other cold blooded animals. Changes in climate are likely to lengthen the transmission seasons of important vector-borne diseases and to alter their geographic range. For example, climate change is projected to widen significantly the area of China where the snail-borne disease schistosomiasis occurs(5). Malaria is strongly influenced by climate. Transmitted by Anopheles mosquitoes, malaria kills almost 1 million people every year – mainly African children under five years old. The Aedes mosquito vector of dengue is also highly sensitive to climate conditions. Studies suggest that climate change could expose an additional 2 billion people to dengue transmission by the 2080s(6). Measuring the health effects from climate change can only be very approximate. Nevertheless, a WHO assessment, taking into account only a

subset of the possible health impacts, concluded that the modest warming that has occurred since the 1970s was already causing over 140 000 excess deaths annually by the year 2004(7).

5. Zhou XN et al. Potential impact of climate change on schistosomiasis transmission in China. *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 2008, 78:188–194.

6. Hales S et al. Potential effect of population and climate changes on global distribution of dengue fever: an empirical model. *The Lancet*, 2002, 360:830–834.

The global burden of disease: 2004 update. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2008.

--From the World Health Organization fact sheet No. 266: "Climate change and health," January 2010.

Though climate change is not the single factor, it plays a role in disease re-emergence, especially among infectious diseases that are spread through parasites and vectors. Environmental choices have a direct impact on greenhouse gas emissions, which affect greenhouse gas emissions. The climate changes created by our choices have begun to make us sick, starting with those who are most vulnerable.

Emergence or resurgence of numerous infectious diseases are strongly influenced

by environmental factors such as climate or land use change. The most sensitive diseases are those that are indirectly transmitted, that is, those requiring either a vehicle for transfer from host to host (e.g., water- and food-borne disease) or an intermediate host or vector as part of its life cycle. Most vector-borne diseases involve arthropod vectors, such as mosquitoes, flies, ticks, or fleas. Because insects are cold blooded, a marginal change in temperature can have a potentially large biologic effect on disease transmission. Therefore, climate change can alter the incidence, seasonal transmission, and geographic range of diseases such as malaria, dengue and yellow fever (mosquitoes), leishmaniasis (sand flies), Lyme disease (ticks), and onchocerciasis or "river blindness" (black flies). Schistosomiasis (involving water snails as the intermediate hosts) is also influenced by water temperature...

Disturbance of habitats due to land cover change is likely the largest environmental cause of altered risk for infectious diseases. Habitat change, in turn, may affect the breeding sites of disease vectors or the biodiversity of vectors or reservoir hosts. Major drivers of land use change include agricultural development or water projects, urbanization and sprawl, and deforestation. These changes, in turn, cause a cascade of factors that exacerbate infectious disease emergence, such as forest fragmentation, pathogen introduction, pollution, poverty, and human migration. These issues are important but complex and are only understood for a few diseases. For example, recent research has shown that forest fragmentation, urban sprawl, and loss of biodiversity are linked to increased Lyme disease risk in the northeastern United States...

Climate change and land use change can affect multiple infectious diseases of

humans, acting either independently or synergistically. Although in isolated cases, disease resurgence has been attributed to recent warming trends, some of the long-term and complex problems posed by climate change may not be readily discernible from other causal factors. Expanded efforts, therefore, in empiric and future scenario based risk assessment are required to anticipate these problems. Moreover, the many health impacts of climate and land use change must be examined in the context of the myriad other environmental and behavioral determinants of disease.

--from "Disease Emergence from Global Climate and Land Use Change," published by SAGE: Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment, a research center in the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at UW-Madison.

Hail and fire: Exodus 9:13-35

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.

כב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, נְטֵה אֶת-יָדְךָ עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיְהִי בָרָד, בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: עַל-הָאָדָם וְעַל-הַבְּהֵמָה, וְעַל כָּל-יֶעֶשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה--בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם.
כג וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מַטְּהוּ, עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיְהִי נִתְּן קֹל לַיָּם וּבָרָד, וְתַתְּ הַלַּךְ אֵשׁ אֶרְצָה; וַיִּמְטֵר יְהוָה בָּרָד, עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם.
כד וַיְהִי בָרָד--וְאֵשׁ, מִתְּלַקְחַת בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּרָד: כִּי בָד מֵאֵד--אֵשׁ רָלֵא-הָיָה כְּמֵהוּ בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, מֵאֵז הַיְתֵה לְגוֹי.
כה וַיִּרְךְ הַבָּרָד בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה, מֵאָדָם, וְעַד-בְּהֵמָה; וְאֶת כָּל-יֶעֶשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה הִכָּה הַבָּרָד, וְאֶת-כָּל-יֶעֶץ הַשָּׂדֶה שִׁבַּר.
כו וְרַק בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן, אֲשֶׁר-רָשָׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל--לֹא הָיָה, בָּרָד.

In the plague of hail with fire, the Egyptians experienced extreme weather. Such "anomalies" as intense hurricanes and torrential rains no longer strike us as unusual. From 100-year storms occurring as often as every 15 years, to increased numbers of forest fires and tsunamis, recently it has seemed as though the planet has had more natural disasters than is typical. Scientists believe unusual weather patterns are the result of global climate change.

Climate is defined not simply as average temperature and precipitation but also by the type, frequency and intensity of weather events. Human-induced climate change has the potential to alter the prevalence and severity of extremes such as heat waves, cold waves, storms, floods and droughts. Though predicting changes in these types of events under a changing climate is difficult, understanding vulnerabilities to such changes is a critical part of estimating

vulnerabilities and future climate change impacts on human health, society and the environment.

Our current level of understanding, as summarized in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report (IPCC, 2007), is as follows:

“Since 1950, the number of heat waves has increased and widespread increases have occurred in the numbers of warm nights. The extent of regions affected by droughts has also increased as precipitation over land has marginally decreased while evaporation has increased due to warmer conditions. Generally, numbers of heavy daily precipitation events that lead to flooding have increased, but not everywhere. Tropical storm and hurricane frequencies vary considerably from year to year, but evidence suggests substantial increases in intensity and duration since the 1970s. In the extratropics, variations in tracks and intensity of storms reflect variations in major features of the atmospheric circulation, such as the North Atlantic Oscillation.”...

It is important to understand that directly linking any one specific extreme event (e.g., a severe hurricane) to human-caused climate change is not possible. However, climate change may increase the probability of some ordinary weather events reaching extreme levels or of some extreme events becoming more extreme. For example, according to NOAA, it is probable that heat waves will become more likely and progressively more intense over the course of decades under current climate change scenarios.

-from “Extreme Events,” Published by the EPA, epa.gov, accessed January 26, 2010

The extent to which “weird weather” has become a part of our lives is obvious by the changes in our vocabulary around environmental issues. Where we once spoke of “global warming,” we now use the words “climate change.” Though global temperatures are on the rise (the years 2000-2009 were the warmest on record: Voiland, A. (2010, January 21). 2009: Second Warmest Year on Record; End of Warmest Decade. NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Accessed January 22, 2010.), what is more immediately concerning is the change in weather overall: all weather seems to be happening on the extremes: drought or flood, freezing or triple-digit temperatures. The WWF (formerly World Wildlife Fund) explains:

Witnessing an increase in extremes:

Hurricanes in the Caribbean and the United States. Extensive droughts in eastern Africa, Australia, southern Europe and parts of China and India. Uncontrollable floods in many parts of the world, sometimes preceded by a long drought.

The impacts of a warming world are scary enough when considered one by one. The view becomes much worse when one looks at them together.

Unpredictable weather makes it very hard for farmers to plan from month to month and year to year.

We still have time – but to avoid an escalation of these impacts we must act now to keep the rise in Earth's average temperature below 2°C.

Cities like Athens, Chicago, Adelaide, Milan, New Delhi and Paris have sweltered under heatwaves. The 2003 summer heatwave in Europe killed 14,800 people in France alone, according to official figures released in September 2003. Extreme droughts have become regular features. Prolonged drought in Australia has continued for years with very few interruptions, and recent droughts in the Amazon, the United States and southern and western Africa have made life extremely hard for people and wildlife. Major floods that used to happen only once in 100 years now take place every 10 or 20 years. Flooding can be disastrous. Houses can be destroyed, lives can be ruined, and wildlife threatened.

Rising sea levels means that tropical cyclones and other extreme storms could result in much greater storm surges that will destroy coastal communities and ecosystems.

An increase in global temperatures and precipitation could add a lot more freshwater to the North Atlantic as glacial meltwater flows into the ocean. Similar to events after the last ice age (10,000 years) this could again stop the Gulf Stream and drop temperatures in Europe by around 5 degrees C.

El Niño events have in recent years increased in frequency and are often not interrupted by La Niña events (the opposite of this particular climatic seesaw).

Locusts: Exodus 10:1-6

And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Go in unto Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these My signs in the midst of them; and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what I have wrought upon Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that ye may know that I am the LORD.' And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him: 'Thus saith the LORD, the G-d of the Hebrews: How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Else, if thou refuse to let My people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring locusts into thy border; and they shall cover the face of the earth, that one shall not be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field; and thy houses shall be filled, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; as neither thy fathers nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day.' And he turned, and went out from Pharaoh.

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, בֹּא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה: כִּי-יֹאנְנִי הַקֶּבֶד דָּת י אֶת-לְבוֹ, וְאֶת-לֵב עַבְדָּיו, לְמַעַן שִׁי אֶת אֶת־יִי אֶל־הַ, בְּקִרְבּוֹ.
ב וּלְמַעַן תִּסְפָּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֶךָ וּבְנֵי-בְנֶךָ, אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלֵּל לְתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֶת-אֶת־יִי תִי, אֲשֶׁר-שָׂמַתִּי בָם; וַיִּדְעֶתֶם, כִּי-יֹאנְנִי יְהוָה.
ג וַיֹּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן, אֶל-פַּרְעֹה, וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֶל הַיְּהוּדִים, עַד-מָתִי מֵאֲנִי לַעֲנֹת מִפְּנֵי; שֶׁלֹּחַ עִמִּי, וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי.
ד כִּי אִם-מֵאֲנִי אֶת־הַ, לֹשֶׁלֶחַ אֶת-עַמִּי--הַנִּנְי מִבֵּיא מִחַר אַרְבֵּה, בְּגִבְלֶךָ.
ה וְכִסְהָ אֶת-עֵינֵי הָאָרֶץ, וְלֹא יִוְכַל לִרְאֹת אֶת-הָאָרֶץ; וְאָכַל אֶת-יִתְרֵי הַפֶּלֶטָה, הַנֶּשֶׁ אֶרֶץ לָכֶם מִן-הַבָּרָד, וְאָכַל אֶת-כָּל-הָעֵץ, הַצֹּמַח לָכֶם מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה.

וּמִלֵּא בַת יָר וּבַת יָל-עֲבָדֶיךָ, וּבַת יָל-מִצְרַיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-רָאוּ אֶב תִּיךָ וְאֲבוֹת אֶב תִּיךָ, מִיּוֹם הַיּוֹתָם עַל-
הָאֲדָמָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה; וַיִּפֹּן וַיֵּצֵא, מֵעַם פְּרָעֹה.

The eighth plague, locusts, has contemporary parallels in the two environmental “plagues” of monoculture & crop resistance. Miguel A. Altieri, in the Division of Insect Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, states in his article “Modern Agriculture: Ecological impacts and the possibilities for truly sustainable farming,”

Until about four decades ago, crop yields in agricultural systems depended on internal resources, recycling of organic matter, built-in biological control mechanisms and rainfall patterns. Agricultural yields were modest, but stable. Production was safeguarded by growing more than one crop or variety in space and time in a field as insurance against pest outbreaks or severe weather. Inputs of nitrogen were gained by rotating major field crops with legumes. In turn rotations suppressed insects, weeds and diseases by effectively breaking the life cycles of these pests. A typical corn belt farmer grew corn rotated with several crops including soybeans, and small grain production was intrinsic to maintain livestock. Most of the labor was done by the family with occasional hired help and no specialized equipment or services were purchased from off-farm sources. In these type of farming systems the link between agriculture and ecology was quite strong and signs of environmental degradation were seldom evident (1).

But as agricultural modernization progressed, the ecology-farming linkage was often broken as ecological principles were ignored and/or overridden. In fact, several agricultural scientists have arrived at a general consensus that modern agriculture confronts an environmental crisis. A growing number of people have become concerned about the long-term sustainability of existing food production systems. Evidence has accumulated showing that whereas the present capital- and technology-intensive farming systems have been extremely productive and competitive, they also bring a variety of economic, environmental and social problems (2).

Evidence also shows that the very nature of the agricultural structure and prevailing policies have led to this environmental crisis by favoring large farm size, specialized production, crop monocultures and mechanization. Today as more and more farmers are integrated into international economies, imperatives to diversity disappear and monocultures are rewarded by economies of scale. In turn, lack of rotations and diversification take away key self-regulating mechanisms, turning monocultures into highly vulnerable agroecosystems dependent on high chemical inputs...

Today monocultures have increased dramatically worldwide, mainly through the geographical expansion of land devoted to single crops and year-to-year production of the same crop species on the same land. Available data indicate that the amount of crop diversity per unit of arable land has decreased and that croplands have shown a tendency toward concentration. There are political and economic forces influencing the trend to devote large areas to monoculture, and in fact such systems are rewarded by economies of scale and contribute

significantly to the ability of national agricultures to serve international markets...

The specialization of production units has led to the image that agriculture is a modern miracle of food production. Evidence indicates, however, that excessive reliance on monoculture farming and agroindustrial inputs, such as capital-intensive technology, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers, has negatively impacted the environment and rural society. Most agriculturalists had assumed that the agroecosystem/natural ecosystem dichotomy need not lead to undesirable consequences, yet, unfortunately, a number of "ecological diseases" have been associated with the intensification of food production. They may be grouped into two categories: diseases of the ecotope, which include erosion, loss of soil fertility, depletion of nutrient reserves, salinization and alkalinization, pollution of water systems, loss of fertile croplands to urban development, and diseases of the biocoenosis [ecosystem], which include loss of crop, wild plant, and animal genetic resources, elimination of natural enemies, pest resurgence and genetic resistance to pesticides, chemical contamination, and destruction of natural control mechanisms. Under conditions of intensive management, treatment of such "diseases" requires an increase in the external costs to the extent that, in some agricultural systems, the amount of energy invested to produce a desired yield surpasses the energy harvested (4).

The loss of yields due to pests in many crops (reaching about 20-30% in most crops), despite the substantial increase in the use of pesticides (about 500 million kg of active ingredient worldwide) is a symptom of the environmental crisis affecting agriculture. It is well known that cultivated plants grown in genetically homogenous monocultures do not possess the necessary ecological defense mechanisms to tolerate the impact of outbreaking pest populations. Modern agriculturists have selected crops for high yields and high palatability, making them more susceptible to pests by sacrificing natural resistance for productivity. On the other hand, modern agricultural practices negatively affect pest natural enemies, which in turn do not find the necessary environmental resources and opportunities in monocultures to effectively and biologically suppress pests...Based on the available data, the environmental (impacts on wildlife, pollinators, natural enemies, fisheries, water and development of resistance) and social costs (human poisonings and illnesses) of pesticide use reach about \$8 billion each year (5). What is worrisome is that pesticide use is on the rise...

Clearly the nature of modern agricultural structure and contemporary policies has decidedly influenced the context of agricultural technology and production, which in turn has led to environmental problems... In fact, given the realities of the dominant economic milieu, policies discourage resource-conserving practices and in many cases such practices are not privately profitable for farmers. So the expectation that a set of policy changes could be implemented for a renaissance of diversified or small scale farms may be unrealistic, because it negates the existence of scale in agriculture and ignores the political power of agribusiness corporations and current trends set forth by globalization. A more radical transformation of agriculture is needed, one guided by the notion that

ecological change in agriculture cannot be promoted without comparable changes in the social, political, cultural and economic arenas that also conform agriculture. In other words, change toward a more socially just, economically viable, and environmentally sound agriculture should be the result of social movements in the rural sector in alliance with urban organizations. This is especially relevant in the case of the new biorevolution, where concerted action is needed so that biotechnology companies feel the impact of environmental, farm labor, animal rights and consumers lobbies, pressuring them to re-orienting their work for the overall benefit of society and nature.

(1) Altieri, M.A. 1995. Agroecology: the science of sustainable agriculture. Westview Press, Boulder

(2) Conway, G.R. and Pretty, J.N. 1991. Unwelcome harvest: agriculture and pollution. Earthscan Publisher, London.

(4) Gliessman, S.R. 1997. Agroecology: ecological processes in agriculture. Ann Arbor Press, Michigan.

(5) Pimentel, D. and H. Lehman 1993. The pesticide question. Chapman and Hall, N.Y.

One way to address the contemporary plagues of monoculture and crop resistance is by using organic products, especially organic foods.

In addition to cutting fossil fuel use and decreasing carbon emissions, a shift to organic farming and the resultant increases in carbon sequestration will make agriculture more resilient and more resistant to onrushing anthropogenic climate change.

Resistance and resilience are technical terms: as ecologist Alison Power observes, resistance is a system's ability to not be affected by a "perturbation," such as a sudden drought or hurricane. Resilience is the measure of the agricultural system's ability to respond to a "perturbation" that does affect it—in other words, how quickly it returns to its former level of functioning, or how close to its former level of functioning it can get to.

There is strong evidence that organic-farming systems, which are usually a mix of diverse-plant communities—the furthest thing from the plains of monocultures that are the mainstay of American agriculture—are both more resistant and more resilient than other types of planting systems.

--from Max Ajl's article, "Organic Farming Yields Far Better Crop Resistance and Resilience," published September 22, 2009 on solveclimate.com.

Darkness: Exodus 10:21-23

And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Stretch out thy hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.' And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

כא וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, נְטֵה יָדְךָ עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ, עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם; וַיִּמָּשׁ, חֹשֶׁךְ.
כב וַיִּטּ מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדוֹ, עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם; וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ-אֲפֹלָה בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, שֵׁלִשׁ יָמִים.

ג ל' א-ראו איש את-אחיו, ול' א-קמו איש מת-חת-יו--ש' ל' ש' ת' ימים; ולכל-ב' נ' י'ש' ראל היה אור,
ב' מוש' ב' תם.

The plague of darkness, certainly among the most frightening of the ten, can be seen as symbolizing our environmental plagues of air and light pollution. The World Health Organization has published “key facts” about air pollution, which include the following:

- * Air pollution is a major environmental risk to health and is estimated to cause approximately 2 million premature deaths worldwide per year.
- * Exposure to air pollutants is largely beyond the control of individuals and requires action by public authorities at the national, regional and even international levels.
- * By reducing particulate matter (PM10) pollution from 70 to 20 micrograms per cubic metre, we can cut air quality related deaths by around 15%.
- * By reducing air pollution levels, we can help countries reduce the global burden of disease from respiratory infections, heart disease, and lung cancer.
- * More than half of the burden from air pollution on human health is borne by people in developing countries. In many cities, the average annual levels of PM10(the main source of which is the burning of fossil fuels) exceed 70 micrograms per cubic metre. The guidelines say that, to prevent ill health, those levels should be lower than 20 micrograms per cubic metre.

Though air pollution must be addressed at the national and international levels, individuals can also make some changes. Drive less by taking advantage of public transportation, carpooling, bicycling, and walking, and when you must drive, be sure to use an efficient car with low or zero emissions. Additionally, reducing your use of energy from fossil fuels and cutting the amount of waste you produce minimizes air pollution.

At the time of our ancestors in Egypt, the idea of light pollution would have been incomprehensible. Now, however, true darkness such as that encountered during this plague is something most living people have never experienced. Light pollution, defined as “any adverse effect of artificial light including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night, and energy waste,” by the International Dark-Sky Association, affects everyone, whether they live in cities or rural areas, developed or developing nations. Additionally, light pollution is harmful to human health, just as air or water pollution.

Unlike astronomers, most of us may not need an undiminished view of the night sky for our work, but like most other creatures we do need darkness. Darkness is as essential to our biological welfare, to our internal clockwork, as light itself. The regular oscillation of waking and sleep in our lives—one of our circadian rhythms—is nothing less than a biological expression of the regular oscillation of light on Earth. So fundamental are these rhythms to our being that altering them is like altering gravity.

For the past century or so, we've been performing an open-ended experiment on ourselves, extending the day, shortening the night, and short-circuiting the human body's sensitive response to light. The consequences of our bright new world are more readily perceptible in less adaptable creatures living in the peripheral glow of our prosperity. But for humans, too, light pollution may take a biological toll. At least one new study has suggested a direct correlation

between higher rates of breast cancer in women and the nighttime brightness of their neighborhoods.

--from "Our Vanishing Night," by Verlyn Klinkenbo, published in *National Geographic*, November 2008

Why mention light pollution in a haggadah about the environment? The problems with light pollution don't stop with human health. Many species of wildlife (nocturnal and otherwise) are affected by excessive light. Additionally, light pollution wastes energy and money.

Although nighttime lighting has seldom been a priority of environmentalists—one of whom described it to me recently as a "soft" issue—bad or unnecessary lighting not only wastes billions of dollars' worth of energy every year but also can wreak havoc on ecosystems. Migrating birds can be fatally "captured" by artificial lights, a fact that was made obvious a half century ago, when early versions of a common meteorological device called a ceilometer—which used a powerful vertical beam of light to measure cloud ceilings—sometimes killed thousands of migrating birds in a single night. Artificial light can be especially lethal to insects. Gerhard Eisenbeis, a German entomologist, has written that outdoor lighting can have a "vacuum cleaner" effect on local insect populations, causing large numbers to be "sucked out of habitat." An earlier German study showed that new, brightly lit gas stations initially attracted large numbers of insects, but that the numbers fell rapidly after two years, presumably because local populations were decimated. One of the several ways in which light fixtures kill insects is by causing them to rest on the ground or in vegetation, where they become easy prey. In Florida, artificial lights have had a disastrous impact on sea-turtle populations. During the summer and the early fall, hatchlings, which emerge primarily at night from nests on Florida beaches, are often fatally attracted to street lights, house lights, and other sources of unshielded artificial illumination, dying after being drawn into open areas, where they are easily attacked by predators, or onto roads. The problem is that newborn sea turtles instinctively move toward the brightest part of the horizon—which, for millions of years, would have been not shopping malls and beach houses but the night sky over the open sea.

--from "The Dark Side," by David Owen, published in *The New Yorker*, August 20, 2007

Thankfully, light pollution can be addressed fairly easily, compared to many environmental problems. The following are practical tips published by the International Dark-Sky Association that address the issues and concerns around light pollution.

Use light only when and where it's needed. Turn off lights when they are not needed and create a curfew for lights-out. Minimize interim light use with timers and motion detectors.

Use only as much light as needed. Over lighting reduces the eye's ability to see outside of the lit area. In addition, excess light can produce glare, which also reduces visibility. Selecting the correct lamp wattage for your needs increases safety and reduces costs.

Shine lights down, not up. A well-designed fixture will direct the light where it's needed most—at the ground. Select new fixtures that are fully shielded; retrofit or replace poor quality fixtures. For more information on selecting dark-sky

friendly fixtures, refer to IDA's Web site and the fixtures featured in the IDA Fixture Seal of Approval program.

Use efficient light sources for outdoor lighting around homes and businesses.

Consider a compact fluorescent for good, energy efficient, economical lighting—a low-wattage lamp gives plenty of light for most properties and applications, and in a fully shielded fixture, it makes an excellent choice. When higher wattage lamps are necessary, be sure that they are fully shielded and energy efficient.

--from "Introduction to Light Pollution," published by the International Dark-Sky Association, revised June 2009, available on darksky.org

Slaying of First Born: Exodus 11:1-7

And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Yet one plague more will I bring upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence; when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.' And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people. And Moses said: 'Thus saith the LORD: About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of cattle. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there hath been none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog whet his tongue, against man or beast; that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, עוֹד נֹגַע אֶחָד אָבִיא עַל-פֶּרְעֹה וְעַל-מִצְרַיִם--אֶחָד-יָבִין, יֵשׁ לְחַטָּאתְכֶם מִזֶּה: כֹּשֶׁל חוּ--כִּלְהֹ, גִרְשׁ יִגְרַשׁ אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה.
ב דַּבְּרָה-בְּנֹא, בְּאֶזְבִּי הָעַם; וְיֵשׁ אֵלּוּ אִישׁ מֵאֵת רַעְיוֹ, וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֵת רַעֲוֹתֶיהָ, כֹּל-לִי-כֶסֶף, וְכָלִי זָהָב.
ג וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת-חַן הָעַם, בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם; גַּם הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה, גָּדוֹל מְאֹד בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, בְּעֵינֵי עַבְדֵי-פֶרְעֹה, וּבְעֵינֵי הָעַם. {ס}
ד וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה: כַּחַצֵּת הַלַּיְלָה, אָנִי יוֹצֵא בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם. ה וַיְמַת כָּל-בְּכוֹר, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם--מִבְּכוֹר פֶּרְעֹה הַיֵּשֵׁב עַל-כִּסֵּאוֹ, עַד בְּכוֹר הַשֶּׁפְחָה אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵי הַרְחִימִים; וְכֹל, בְּכוֹר בַּהֲמָה.
ו וְהַיְתֵה צַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה, בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, אֲשֶׁר כָּמֹה לֹא נִהְיְתָה, וְכַמֹּה לֹא תִסְפָּה.
ז וְכֹל לְבַנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֹא יִחַרְץ-כֶּלֶב לִשְׁנוֹ, לְמֵאִישׁ, וְעַד-בַּהֲמָה--לְמַעַן, תִּדְעוּן, אֲשֶׁר יִפְלֶה יְהוָה, בְּיַד מִצְרַיִם וּבִין יִשְׂרָאֵל.

The tenth, most violent, plague (death of the firstborn), must have been horrifying for the Israelites as well as their Egyptian neighbors. Who was this G-d whose justice mirrored the oppression the Israelites had suffered? Who was this G-d who hardened the heart of Pharaoh, just as he had begun to free the Israelites? A poem by Eleanor Wilner describes the pain and expresses the horror of the plague of the firstborn.

Miriam's Song Death to the first born sons, always – The first fruits to the G-ds of men. She had not meant it so, standing in the reeds Back then, the current tugging at her skirt like hands, she had only meant to save her little brother Moses, red-faced with rage when he was given to the river. The long curve of the Nile would keep their line, the promised land around the bend. Years later when the gray angel, like the smoke trail of a dying comet, passed by their houses with blood smeared over doorways, Miriam, her head hot in her hands, wept as the city swelled with the wail of Egypt's women. Then she straightened up, slowly plaited her hair and wound it tight around her head, drew her long white cloak with its deep blue threads around her... [and] went to join the others, to leave one ruler for another, one Egypt for the next. Some nights you still can see her; by some river where the willows hang, listening to the heavy tread of armies, those sons once hidden dark in baskets, and in her mind she sees her sister, the black-eyed Pharaoh's daughter, lift the baby like a gift from the brown flood waters and take him home to save him, such a pretty boy and so disarming, as his dimpled hands reach up, his mouth already open for the breast.

What is the eco-plague of the firstborn? It must be poverty, as the poor in any society are the most vulnerable. Hunger and disease disproportionately affect the poorest in each country, with the worst consequences in developing nations. In the United States, poverty is alternately romanticized and blamed on its victims. Few social safety nets are in place for the poor and those on the brink of poverty. Judaism does not champion poverty as a laudable state, nor does it condemn the poor. However, Judaism does treat its poor adherents differently than the wealthy ones, and makes requirements of Jews in regard to their behavior around poverty and its related social ills.

There are many commandments around poverty, for example: that of making loans to the needy (Deuteronomy 14:7-8), or of pe'ah (leaving the corners of one's fields for the poor to glean and leaving dropped fruit in a vineyard during harvest) (Leviticus 19:9-10). Perhaps the most pertinent commandment around poverty is the admonishment to "choose life." The poor suffer excessively from ecological problems. They could not evacuate New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, and they become ill from contaminated water while their neighbors install filtering systems or buy water in bottles. Corporations tend to place their most polluting factories and plants within the poorest countries and neighborhoods, where the people have little power to create change.

Climate change is a serious risk to poverty reduction and threatens to undo decades of development efforts. As the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development states, "the adverse effects of climate change are already evident, natural disasters are more frequent and more devastating and developing countries more vulnerable." While climate change is a global phenomenon, its negative impacts are more severely felt by poor people and poor countries. They are more vulnerable because of their high dependence on natural resources, and their limited capacity to cope with climate variability and extremes...

Today, it is widely agreed by the scientific community that climate change is already a reality. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has

concluded that human activities are altering our climate system and will continue to do so. Over the past century, surface temperatures have increased and associated impacts on physical and biological systems are increasingly being observed. Science tells us that climate change will bring about gradual changes, such as sea level rise, and shifts of climatic zones due to increased temperatures and changes in precipitation patterns. Also, climate change is very likely to increase the frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and storms. While there is uncertainty in the projections with regard to the exact magnitude, rate, and regional patterns of climate change, its consequences will change the fate of many generations to come and particularly impact on the poor if no appropriate measures are taken. The impacts of climate change, and the vulnerability of poor communities to climate change, vary greatly, but generally, climate change is superimposed on existing vulnerabilities. Climate change will further reduce access to drinking water, negatively affect the health of poor people, and will pose a real threat to food security in many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In some areas where livelihood choices are limited, decreasing crop yields threaten famines, or where loss of landmass in coastal areas is anticipated, migration might be the only solution. The macroeconomic costs of the impacts of climate change are highly uncertain, but very likely have the potential to threaten development in many countries.

--from "Poverty and Climate Change," published by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development

Compounding the issue in the US is the overwhelming sense of individualism and personal responsibility. When thousands of people "refused" to evacuate New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, they were blamed, though many simply could not afford to leave their homes. Furthermore, their homes were located in the areas most affected by the storm, and were least able to withstand the violent weather. People who are affected by poverty are more likely to be minority groups, and are "stigmatized as lazy, fraudulent, or agents of their own downfall." "Normally in the US, rather than being seen as people with rights, the poor are vilified for their poverty, as though it was some sort of morbid lifestyle choice ... to define poverty and social inequity as human rights issues helps explain why [that] is so inherently reprehensible..." ("Poverty, inequality, and human rights," by Alice Donald and Elizabeth Mottershaw, September 2009, Joseph Rountree Foundation.)

Both systemic issues and individual choices fuel poverty. Americans would do well to address those systemic issues (healthcare, public education, and access to healthy foods), which would encourage improvement in the areas of personal responsibility, such as work ethic and willpower. Despite the accusations of people like Pat Robertson (who famously blamed Haitians for the 2010 earthquake that killed hundreds of thousands of the country's citizens), natural disasters do the greatest damage to those with the fewest resources. After all, "disasters are the products of the social, political, and economic environment, as well as the natural events that cause them," and "The poor in the U.S. are more vulnerable to natural disasters, due to such factors as place and type of residence, building construction and social exclusion," according to "Poverty and Disasters in the United States," *Natural Hazards* 32(1):89-110, 2004; Alice Fothergill and Lori Peek.

In Judaism, tzedakah is often interpreted as charitable giving, but actually means “righteousness” or justice.

“In the Book of Deuteronomy, G-d commands the Israelites "to open thy hand unto the poor and needy." For Jews, this aid is not a voluntary act of kindness-it is obligatory. According to the Book of Leviticus, farmers in biblical Israel were obligated to leave a corner of their fields for the poor to harvest themselves, and to leave the gleanings of their own harvest-the grain or fruits that had been left or forgotten-to the poor, the widowed, and the orphaned. The Hebrew Bible also mandates a special tithe, a sort of public tax on income, that pious Jews for centuries have scrupulously set aside for the poor.

“Judaism's War on Poverty,” by David G. Dalin; Policy Review, No. 85, 1997.

Dayeinu - דַּיְנוּ :
“It Would Have Been Sufficient”

G-d has bestowed many favors upon us.

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים,

דַּיְנוּ :

ולא עשה בהם שפטים,

Had G-d brought us out of Egypt, and not executed judgments against the Egyptians, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אלו עשה בהם שפטים,

דַּיְנוּ :

ולא עשה באלהיהם,

Had G-d executed judgments against the Egyptians, and not their G-ds, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אלו עשה באלהיהם,

דַּיְנוּ :

ולא הרג אתבכוריהם,

Had G-d executed judgments against their G-ds and not put to death their firstborn, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אלו הרג אתבכוריהם,

דַּיְנוּ :

ולא נתן לנו אתממוןם,

Had G-d put to death their firstborn, and not given us their riches, It would have been enough—Dayeinu

אלו נתן לנו אתממוןם,

דַּיְנוּ :

ולא קרע לנו אתהים,

Had G-d given us their riches, and not split the Sea for us, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אלו קרע לנו אתהים,

דַּיְנוּ :

ולא העבירנו בתוכו בחרבה

Had G-d split the Sea for us, and not led us through it on dry land, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אלו העבירנו בתוכו בחרבה,

דַּיְנוּ :

ולא שקע צרינו בתוכו,

Had G-d led us through it on dry land, and not sunk our foes in it, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אלו שקע צרינו בתוכו,

וְלֹא סָפַק צָרְכֵינוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבַּעַיִם שָׁנָה, דְּיָנוּ:

Had G-d sunk our foes in it, and not satisfied our needs in the desert for forty years, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ סָפַק צָרְכֵינוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבַּעַיִם שָׁנָה,
וְלֹא הָאָכִילנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן, דְּיָנוּ:

Had G-d satisfied our needs in the desert for forty years, and not fed us the manna, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הָאָכִילנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן,
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשֶּׁבַעַת, דְּיָנוּ:

Had G-d fed us the manna, and not given us the Sabbath, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשֶּׁבַעַת,
וְלֹא קָרַבנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי, דְּיָנוּ:

Had G-d given us the Sabbath, and not brought us to Mount Sinai, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ קָרַבנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי,
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, דְּיָנוּ:

Had G-d brought us to Mount Sinai, and not given us the Torah, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,
וְלֹא הִכְנִיסנוּנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, דְּיָנוּ:

Had G-d given us the Torah, and not brought us into Israel, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הִכְנִיסנוּנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְלֹא בָּנֵה לָנוּ אֶת־בַּיִת הַבְּחִירָה, דְּיָנוּ:

Had G-d brought us into Israel, and not built the Temple for us, It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוֹצִיָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם (2)
דְּיָנוּ:

*Ilu hotzi hotzi-anu mimitzrayim,
hotzi-anu mimitzrayim (2) Dayeinu*

Had G-d brought us out of Egypt,
It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן נָתַן לָנוּ,
נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשֶּׁבַעַת, דְּיָנוּ:

*Ilu natan natan lanu et hashabat,
natan lanu et hashabat (2) Dayeinu*

Had G-d given us the Sabbath
It would have been enough--Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן
נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, דְּיָנוּ:

Ilu natan natan lanu

natan lanu et hatorah (2) Dayeinu
Had G-d given us the Torah
It would have been enough--Dayeinu

Every Pesach, the Jewish people sing "Dayeinu" at the Seder. The word Dayeinu, translated "It would have been enough," is repeated throughout the song. It would have been enough if G-d had only taken us out of Egypt, but had not divided the sea, or if G-d had given us Torah but had not brought us into the Land of Israel. The smallest of all these blessings would have been enough for us. This song teaches gratitude, an appreciation for all things we are given. The Israelites were slaves, forced into hard labor, who had to leave their homes and friends in order to escape to freedom. Despite this, the smallest miracle would have been sufficient.

How much more we have to be thankful for, than those slaves who left Egypt! Though of course it has its problems, our country was founded on the concepts of democracy and freedom. Most of Americans have plenty to eat, clean water to drink, sufficient clothing and shelter. Many of us are lucky enough to have permanent, stable homes within loving communities. Shouldn't this, too, be enough?

Yet, we often fail to express our gratitude for all these blessings; instead, though we have so much, we feel more pointedly the absence of other things we desire. Our identities are too often composed of what we own and the economic stability of our country has been based upon a consumption society, in which goods are consumed at a rate far greater than actual need. The United States is one of the wealthiest in the world. Americans own far more than they will ever need, and overconsumption leads to waste. Most pollution is caused by either the very poor or the very rich, as the most-advanced societies are to blame for the environmental destruction in the least-developed nations. "...most environmental damage or degradation is caused either by people who have too much (and therefore are unconcerned about efficiency and waste) or by people who don't have enough, who, in the struggle for daily existence, are unable to take into account long-term considerations." (Benstein *The Way into Judaism and the Environment*, p.120) A good question to ask oneself might be, "How much is enough?"

Luckily, halachah directly addresses this issue. The commandment "Do not destroy," applies not just to actual wanton destruction of goods, but also to waste through excessive consumption. "In fact, according to *halachah*, any usable item is covered by this prohibition [against wasting]." (*Compendium of Sources in Halachah and the Environment* 23) *Mishneh Torah* (Rambam) Melakhim 6:10 states, "One who breaks vessels, tears clothing, destroys a building, stops up a well, or wastes food in a destructive fashion, transgresses the prohibition of 'Do not destroy.'" The average American creates 45 tons of garbage in her lifetime, and most of it ends up in landfills. (Bernstein *Let the Earth Teach You Torah* 83) Our lifestyles and personal choices are partially to blame. Consumption is encouraged by our political leaders to stimulate and grow the economy, but this same consumption wreaks havoc on the environment and threatens to deplete our scarce and valuable natural resources. Furthermore, this is an incredibly short-sighted view of the economy and the environment. After all, as Alan Durning states in *How Much is Enough?: The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth*, future "business...will not do well on a dying planet." In recommending minimization of consumption of goods and defending against the argument that moving away from "junk food, cars, and disposables" will leave "impoverished lands stranded in destitution," he encourages considering the long-term impact and eventual environmental and economic collapse that continuing current levels of

consumption will cause, and states “the fact that some workers would lose jobs is no more an argument against lowering consumption than job losses in the weapons industry are an argument against peace.” (p. 106-7)

Consumerism, or “affluenza,” has been called and compared to a new religion. We live in a consumer culture. Buying has become a ritual, and the ownership and use of goods creates identity in our society. Many Americans rank their fulfillment levels based on how much money they make, despite the fact that “things” cannot satisfy our desire for purpose. Ecclesiastes aptly describes the experience of pursuing wealth and comfort, then discovering that those dreams are a mirage.

1 I said in my heart: 'Come now, I will try thee with mirth, and enjoy pleasure';
and, behold, this also was vanity.
11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor
that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind,
and there was no profit under the sun.

Instead, connections with other people (our relationships) and leisure time (to spend doing things we love) provide more satisfaction than the newest gadget or a trendy wardrobe. Material items can never fulfill what are non-material needs; social, psychological, and spiritual desires will not be quenched through shopping. Shopping is no longer an errand of necessity; it now takes the place of other, more fulfilling, activities with less environmental impact, such as religious practice or the political activism. “The soaring consumer lines that track the rise of the consumer society are, from another perspective, surging indicators of environmental harm.” And though most of us do not consider ourselves to be living luxuriously, our lifestyles could not be reproduced throughout the world population.

Of course, those in true poverty cannot be helped with non-material platitudes. One cannot eat inner peace or warm oneself on “living simply.” Having too little is problematic for much of the world’s population, but not for most Americans. Despite our country’s problems with health care, women’s rights, or public schools, the vast majority of Americans do not go to bed hungry at night. However, most of us *do* have too much stuff. The very rich and the very poor are those who most abuse the earth. “The global environment cannot support 1.1 billion of us living like American consumers, much less 5.5 billion people, or a future population of at least 8 billion.” “If the life-supporting ecosystems of the planet are to survive for future generations, the consumer society will have to dramatically curtail its use of resources--partially by shifting to high-quality, low-input durable goods and partly by seeking fulfillment through leisure, human relationships, and other nonmaterial avenues.” (25) We must learn that happiness cannot come from a trip to the mall, but instead is affected by things like “social relationships, work, and leisure.” These three things are exactly the ones most affected by consumer culture. Americans tend to feel fear from strangers, isolation from their communities, and disconnected from others. Our lives are busier, but much less fulfilling than those of our grandparents and great-grandparents. We work more and buy more, but have less satisfaction than humans with less--both now and in the past.

“The consumer society fails to deliver on its promise of fulfillment through material comforts because human wants are insatiable, human needs are socially defined, and the real sources of personal happiness are elsewhere. Indeed, the strength of social relationships and the quality of leisure--both

crucial psychological determinants of happiness in life--appear as much diminished as enhanced in the consumer class. The consumer society, it seems, has impoverished us by raising our income." (48)

During Pesach, we not only do not eat chametz, we are not permitted even to own it. For generations, Jews have been asking, "Why?" Michael Strassfeld attempts an answer that reflects on our inclination toward materialism in *A Book of Life: Embracing Judaism as a Spiritual Practice*.

"Why is something permissible fifty-one weeks a year suddenly prohibited? Why are we not only forbidden to eat hametz but even to possess it? The answer may be that we are prohibited from owning hametz to remind us that slavery lies among our possessions. The things we possess often possess us. Hametz may represent the way possessions lead to servitude. Are we working in order to acquire the necessities we need to live or in order to support ourselves in a style we covet? Is acquiring the only way we can measure our success? What do we really want, and is it reflected in or distorted by what we have? The prohibition of hametz asks us to reexamine not only our expensive electronic equipment, summer homes, and mammoth gas-guzzling vehicles, but our most basic possession, our food. By asking that we not just refrain from eating hametz but also diligently remove it from our homes, the tradition tells us that slavery cannot be successfully put aside for a week. It is too easy just to hide it away; rather we must remove it from our homes, from our lives. We must be freed from all the things that we think we possess, but which in fact possess us.

Taking something like hametz that is normally permitted, making it evil, and prohibiting it, causes us to question our most basic assumptions about the certainties of our lives." (234)

Not long ago, as I was composting the rinds and peels collecting in my kitchen, my mind wandered to the words of a mystic rabbi who claimed that whenever any event happened in the world, it surely has a reason for existing—that it is up to us to find the spark of holiness even in our greatest mistakes. Those things that we'd like to hide from, tuck away, and forget, he said, must be held up to the light, because there is something in them, some energy which could hold the key to our happiness and fulfillment, that is calling to be redeemed....We take for granted the idea that there always has been and always will be waste. Yet waste is in the eye of the waster. Waste is whatever we define as needing to be thrown "away." There is what we need, and then there is the other, the unnecessary, the waste. We define who we are by what we are not. We use waste to deny the reality of what we don't want to see and feel. Modern culture has multiplied the quantities and categories of waste. As we vainly attempt to shield ourselves from all contingencies, troubles, and inconveniences, we separate ourselves off from our world and one another. It is time to look at waste and ourselves in a new way.

There Is No "Away" The environment, our bodies, emotions, our history, health, time, and space—all are tied together as part of the garment of light and energy which is creation. According to the radical spiritual monotheism found in Jewish sources, all created phenomena are united by keeping a spark of G-d; all

are manifestations of holiness, even though that holiness may be difficult to perceive in the moment. This emphasis on the unity of all is the beginning of an eco-theology that says that if everything is part of G-d, nothing is "waste." The idea of "waste management" is that there is a place "away" where foul, useless things can be tossed. The concept of waste implies that something could be absolutely useless, as if it were outside the realm of the holiness called creation. To be outside of the holiness of creation is to be outside of G-d. In that sense, the very idea of waste as something that could exist outside or "away" from G-d is a kind of idol worship. Thus, the concept of waste is antithetical to a monotheism that posits an omnipresent G-d. With this understanding, Jewish environmentalism and Jewish spirituality come together to form an organic and holistic eco-theology moving from waste to wonder. As I toss my rinds into a makeshift chicken-wire bin and cover the smelly mess with hay, I realize that the same principle which operates in my kitchen-to-compost-to-garden cycle also operates in the spiritual and psychological processes that operate in our minds and bodies and souls. We know that ecological systems work in energy and nutrient loops in such a way that nothing is ever lost. The death of one creature means the fertilization of another; the out-breath of a plant is the in-breath of an animal. In a spiritual understanding of the world, such as is found in the kabbalistic and Hasidic masters, every event, every thought, contains a spark of G-d and has a purpose for coming into the world. Similarly, from contemporary psychology and holistic paradigms of health, we know that feelings and thoughts which are buried in the sub-conscious do not go away, but continue to affect us until they are uncovered, at which point they can actually add to our energy and self-understanding. This same ecological and spiritual understanding applies to the political realm: There is no country that is so irrelevant, so "powerless," that it can be simply ignored, dumped upon, considered waste. And it applies to the physical mass of the earth itself: There is no place "away" for all our garbage to be dumped. The oceans are not big enough for our chemical waste; the atmosphere is becoming saturated with carbon from our cars and industry, threatening us with disastrous climate change. The world is One, and there is no sense in this dumping on the "Other." There is no "away."

The Roots of An Illusion If there is no reality in nature or in spirit to the concept of waste, how did it ever get started? Without attempting to uncover an historical answer, Jewish tradition gives us some narratives which hint at the beginning of the waste culture we currently inhabit. Egypt, Sodom, and the Tower of Babel, all are cultures portrayed in the Hebrew Bible as being obsessed with controlling their environment. The peoples of these places thought they could conquer death through technology and social problems through totalitarian control. Their economic systems, based on the umbilical cord of the rivers and bolstered with the technology of irrigation and massive building, encouraged their propensity to act like G-ds...Pretending to be G-ds, we "waste" the rest of the world that doesn't fit our picture, even as we depend on it to provide us with raw materials, cheap labor, and markets for our products. Egypt, for example, is pictured in the Bible as the perverse corruption of the image of the womb. In one verse, it is actually pictured as the womb from which the Israelite nation was born: "Has any G-d taken a nation out of the innards of another nation?" Yet, it is a womb which will not serve its natural function of

letting the infant go out into life, but rather tries to hold on, becoming a tomb. Egypt is like the womb which Jeremiah speaks about in his despair, as he laments ever being born into this world, wishing "that my mother might be my grave, and her womb big [with me] for all time" (Jeremiah 20:17). It is Egypt's need for perfection, its need to hold onto an illusion of complete control, especially through technology, that makes it into a place of death rather than life. The shocking example of this is found in the story in which the angel Gabriel appears before the heavenly court and gives evidence that the Israelites need to be freed from slavery: an Egyptian brick has been found encasing an Israelite baby. This image, in which the brick replaces the womb and becomes a tomb, encapsulates the biblical picture of Egypt. It is anti-life, even as its pharaohs, with their pyramids and mummification rites, grasp for eternal life. What does this narrative have to do with waste? Waste is invented when humans, who inhabit a messy, unruly, physical, social, and psychological world, try to be G-ds and control this world absolutely. At this, we can only fail. We can only create an illusion of a perfect world, at best a temporary bubble of perfection. But in order to maintain this illusion of control, the unruly parts of life which don't fit the picture are tossed outside. The category of waste comes about through the narrowing of consciousness: putting that which we don't like, that which we can't control, out of sight, out of mind. We have inherited this culture of hyper-control, and our particular culture in the contemporary United States has honed it to a fine art. Pretending to be G-ds, we "waste" the rest of the world that doesn't fit our picture, even as we depend on it to provide us with raw materials, cheap labor, and markets for our products. Those in the upper and upper-middle classes can count on a medical system that tries to defy and deny death through more and more expensive technology and drugs, even as this advanced medicine is not available to millions without insurance. We eat food with little idea of where it comes from, clothe ourselves with materials made who-knows-where by who-knows-who, and get our energy with the unconscious flip of a switch from who-knows-what coal or nuclear power plant. Our media and "mainstream" culture do not encourage us to look into the sources of our wealth. The opposite is true. We are encouraged to be lulled into a consumer's haze of TV, media hype, and endless talking heads arguing within a narrowly defined limit of the "normal." The "normal" culture we inhabit doesn't allow much reflection on the sources of our wealth or the places where we dump our waste. This comfortable bubble of affluence is itself a waste culture, our modern Egypt.

From Waste to Wonder: Living in the Paradox How do we get back to a world without waste? The trick is to live in the middle of a paradox: to realize that we live in a world which is imperfect as well as perfect. That is, we must learn again that everything is a part of G-d, that everything has a spark of the divine, but also that on this particular level of divine manifestation these sparks are often an impossible, unpredictable mystery. We must learn to let go of our obsession with control, and open our eyes to wonder. Living in this paradoxical, perfect/imperfect world takes skill, practice, patience, and knowledge. Spiritual traditions can provide us with some of the tools to move from waste to wonder...Judaism may be a resource for the movement from a waste culture to a culture of wonder. This culture seeks a dynamic balance and invites plurality of

voices. If by saying there is one G-d we mean that everything participates in G-d, there is nothing which is completely outside of G-d and we must see how the multiplicity and seeming confusion fit together. The Other can never be completely other; it becomes our task to find the proper balance between borders and openness, between covering and light, which may illuminate the whole. If we have the wisdom and humility to live with rough edges and give up on total control, to deal with the difficulties and dangers as temporary coverings of the light, to learn to appreciate the garments of light which make up our world, and to seek the beauty of patterns formed by those many garments, we can move from waste to wonder.

--from "From Waste to Wonder: Steps to a Spiritual Ecology of Living," by Natan Margalit; Published in *Tikkun* July/Aug 2004

Take a look at what you value, what you have, and what makes you happy. Dayeinu?

רבן גמליאל - Rabban Gamliel

רבן גמליאל היה אומר: כל ש'ל'א אמר ש'ל'שה דברים אלו ב'פסח, לא יצא ידי חובתו, וא'לו הן: פסח.
מצ'ה ומרור:

Rabban Gamliel hayah omeir: Kol shelo amar sh'loshah d'varim eilu bapesach, lo yatza y'dei chovato, v'eilu hein:

Pesach. Matzah, U-maror

Rabban Gamliel would teach that all those who had not spoken of three words on Passover had not fulfilled their obligation to tell the story, and these three words are: Pesah [Paschal Lamb], Matzah and Maror [Bitter Herb].

פסח

פסח ש'ה'יו אבותינו אוכלים, ב'זמן ש'ב'ית המ'קד'ש היה קי'ם, על שום מ'ה? על שום ש'פסח הק'דוש ב'רוך הוא, על ב'ת'י אבותינו ב'מצ'ר'ים, ש'נ'אמר: 'ואמרת'ם זבח פסח הוא לי', א'שר פסח על ב'ת'י בני יש'ראל ב'מצ'ר'ים, ב'נגפו את מצ'ר'ים ואת ב'ת'ינו הצ'יל, ו'יק'ד הע'ם ו'י'ש'ת'חו.

Pesach she-hayu avoteinu och'lim, bizman shebeit hamikdash hayah kayam, al shum mah? Al shum she-pasach hakadosh Baruch hu, al batei avoteinu b'mitzrayim, shene-emar: va-amartem zevach pesach hu l'Adonai, asher pasach al batei v'nei yisra-eil b'mitzrayim, b'nag'po et mitzrayim v'et bateinu hitzil, vayikod ha-am vayishtachavu.

The Pesah which our ancestors ate when the Second Temple stood: what is the reason for it? They ate the Pesah because G-d "passed over" the houses of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is written in the Torah: "And You shall say, 'It is the Passover offering for G-d, who passed over the houses of the Israelites saving us in Mitzrayim but struck the houses of the Egyptians. . . .'"

מצ'ה

מצ'ה זו ש'אנו אוכלים, על שום מ'ה? על שום ש'ל'א הספ'יק ב'צ'קם ש'ל אבותינו להחמיץ, עד ש'נ'גלה עליהם מלך מלכי המ'לכים, הק'דוש ב'רוך הוא, וגא'לם, ש'נ'אמר: 'ויאפו את ה'ב'צ'ק, א'שר הוצ'יא ממ'צ'ר'ים, ע'ג'ת מצ'ות, כ'י ל'א חמץ: כ'י ג'רשו ממ'צ'ר'ים, ו'ל'א יכלו להתמהמה, וגם צ'דה ל'א עשו להם.

Matzah zo she-anu och'lim, al shum mah? Al shum shelo hispik b'tzeikam shel avoteinu l'hachamitz, ad sheniglah aleihem melech malchei ham'lachim, hakadosh Baruch hu, ug'alam,

shene-emar: vayofu et habatzeik, asher hotzi-u mimitzrayim, ugot matzot, ki lo chameitz ki gor'shu mimitzrayim, v'lo yach'lu l'hitmahmeiha, v'gam tzeidah lo asu lahem.

Matzah - what does it symbolize in the Seder? There was insufficient time for the dough of our ancestors to rise when G-d was revealed to us and redeemed us, as it is written in the Torah: "And they baked the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt into matzoh - cakes of unleavened bread - which had not risen, for having been driven out of Egypt they could not tarry, and they had made no provisions for themselves."

מרור

מרור זה שֶׁאֵנוֹ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁמֶרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת־חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּמִּצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה, בַּחֲמֹר וּבְלִבָּנִים, וּבְכָל־עֲבֹדָה בַּשָּׂדֶה: אֵת כָּל־עֲבֹדָתָם, אֲשֶׁר עָבְדוּ בָהֶם בְּפֶרֶךְ.

Maror zeh she-anu och'lim, al shum mah? al shum shemeir'ru hamitzrim et chaye avoteinu b'mitzrayim, shene-emar. Vay'mararu et chayeihem ba-avodah kashah, b'chomer uvilveinim, uv'chol avodah basadeh, eit kol avodatam, asher av'du vahem b'farech.

Why do we eat Maror? For the reason that the Egyptians embitter the lives of our ancestors in Mitzrayim, as the Torah states: "And they embittered their lives with servitude, with mortar and bricks without straw, with every form of slavery in the field and with great torment."

Every Passover seder must include an explanation of three elements (Pesach, matzoh, and maror), or it does not fulfill the commandment to tell the story.

Pesach, or what symbolizes the Passover sacrifice: The shankbone on the seder plate is representative of the Paschal lamb, an animal the ancient Egyptians worshiped. Sacrificing a sheep under Egyptian slavery was an act of defiance on the part of the slaves, and an initial way that our people began to exert their power and reach for freedom. (Silverman, Rabbi Morris, ed. *Passover Haggadah: New Translation with explanatory notes and original readings* (Hartford: Prayer Book Press, 1959); p. 26)

The instructions for the Passover sacrifice were very strict: the lamb had to be purchased three days prior to the sacrifice (Exodus 12:6), must be killed according to the laws of kashrut (in the least painful way possible), and had to be completely consumed that night. If the animal was too much for a single family to eat, they had to share with another family. (*JPS Commentary on the Haggadah* 10; Exodus 12:4, Parashat Bo)

These commandments hold many environmental lessons. One traditional, environmentally-conscious alternative to the shankbone is a roasted beet. In the Gemara [*Pesahim 114b*] Rav Huna recommends a beetroot for those who refrain from having meat on their table; the beet represents the paschal lamb by standing in for the shankbone. Vegetarian seders are a long Ashkenazi practice. Since the destruction of the temple, many seders have been meatless to prevent confusion regarding whether the meat was the meal or a sacrifice. (*Pesahim 109a*)

What can we learn from the injunction to keep the lamb for three days before it was sacrificed? Environmentalists know that meat-eating is energy-intensive and pollutes the environment in a way that vegetarian foods do not. Further, the treatment of animals in many so-called "factory farms" is horrifying. The requirement to hold the lamb for three days before the sacrifice is a reminder that the animal is not just a commodity, and that the taking of life (even for sacrifice, and certainly for consumption) is serious business. This rule required the family who obtained the lamb to become its caretakers. After tending the animal and providing for it for three days, it could no longer be a simple article of trade. The "sacrifice" would be seen as more than a

transaction; after all, it entailed the loss of conscious life, thus should not be taken lightly. In Jewish law, the consumption of animal products requires care and attention that eating plants does not; meat-eating is required to be a mindful act. Just as the Israelite women felt empathy for their Egyptian counterparts after the plague of the firstborn, so too are seder participants encouraged to feel the loss required by eating animals, their true sacrifice.

Further, we are required by our tradition to make the death of any animal as painless and meaningful as possible. This is emphasized in the principle “tzaar baalei chayyim” (the avoidance of cruelty to animals), as well as in the laws of kashrut. Jewish people are not allowed to cause animals to suffer, or to stand idly as another person does so. Thousands of years before Bentham, our ancestors knew intuitively that “The question is not, can they reason? Nor, can they talk? But, can they suffer?” Furthermore, because of the excessive energy requirements of animals as food, an important part of environmental ethics is the reduction or elimination of animals used as such.

Finally, halachah required the entire sacrifice to be consumed, another indication that animal foods are treated specially and that certain strictures are obliged when life-affirming activities such as eating require the death of another. This practice can also be seen as an admonishment against waste: a warning against making too much, and against hoarding. Billions (and perhaps hundreds of billions) of pounds of safe, edible food is thrown away in our country every year, while the poor remain hungry and without even access to healthy foods. (Kantor, “Estimating and Addressing America’s Food Losses” 3) In the Jewish tradition, waste is considered the same as destruction. (*Compendium of Sources in Halachah and the Environment* 23, *Mishneh Torah Melakhim* 6:10)

Matzoh, the “bread of affliction,” is the second symbol of the seder that requires explanation. Matzoh is unleavened bread that represents our affliction as an enslaved people, but also is symbolic of our redemption and freedom.

“[Matzoh] represents where our spirits are flat. It represents what happens when we are beaten down, pressed down, and see ourselves as powerless. But, just as matzoh has two physical sides, it also has two spiritual sides. From one perspective it is the bread of affliction, but seen from the other side, it is also the bread of liberation, of freedom, and of power to change our worlds for the better.

How do we make this transformation, from being pressed down to rising up? To answer this, we must ask, what is the significance of matzoh? We are forbidden to eat or possess chametz in any form during Passover. Chametz, literally, is food with leavening; it is food that swells up. Chasidic teachers saw chametz metaphorically, as the overindulgence in our lives. As matzoh is the simplest bread possible, chametz represents the luxury or surplus our lives do not require.

What is our chametz today? What excess can we be rid of, tone down, and keep in proper proportion, place and perspective?”

Adapted from “Street Seders for the Global Climate Crisis,” by Rabbi Jeff Sultar, Director of the *Green Menorah Program* of *The Shalom Center*; published in the April 2008 issue of *Zeek* magazine. (© 2006 by Zeek Magazine and the author.)

“Passover is a natural time to take an "environmental inventory" of the *chametz* in our world and to be mindful of the simple lives our ancestors led in the desert in their pursuit of freedom. *Chametz* is the Hebrew term for any of the five basic biblical grains which traditionally observant Jews remove from their homes. These include wheat, rye, oats, barley, and spelt--that have been mixed with water and allowed to ferment. When our ancestors were dwelling in the desert, they had no choice but to live simply. In our day, simplicity has come to mean conservation, not using more than you need, and not being wasteful. Jewish law prohibits wasteful consumption. When we waste resources, we are violating the law of *bal tashchit*--Do not destroy. (Deuteronomy 20: 19-20). Matzoh itself is a symbol of simplicity and humility, and is a metaphor for getting back to basics and our natural selves. It is in contrast to our leavened or puffed up, over-inflated selves caught up in accumulation and over-consumption. In *A Night of Questions, A Passover Haggadah*, Rabbi Michael Strassfeld further explains the paradox of matzoh. Not only was it the bread that our ancestors did not have time to let rise as they fled Egypt, but it is also the bread that they ate as slaves. Yet, even in its simplicity, it was filling and satisfying--supporting the old adage that less is more. And since matzoh is the bread that took us from slavery to freedom, it is also a symbol of the possibility for change. We can use this as inspiration for making the kind of changes and choices that lead to a more sustainable lifestyle. We need to take immediate steps to initiate these changes and to slow down the rate in which we are destroying, depleting, and wasting our natural resources. The current way we generate and use energy, for example, threatens the health and existence of all creation. Because of our excessive and inefficient burning of fossil fuels (oil, coal, and natural gas) to produce energy, with only 5% of the world's population, the US produces 25% of the annual heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions that create air pollution and contribute to climate change and global warming. Climate change is causing a rise in sea levels resulting in flooding; drought resulting in famine; the destruction of natural habitats endangering species; and an increase in the rates of asthma, respiratory illness and infectious diseases. These environmental plagues are a reminder that climate change is an issue of justice. We are already witnessing that those most vulnerable-low-income communities, indigenous peoples, the elderly, and children-those who can least afford health care or to relocate when faced with economic or cultural displacement are suffering disproportionately. "Justice, justice, you shall pursue, in order that you and your children may live." (Deuteronomy 16:20). *Pikuach nefesh* teaches us that saving a life is paramount to all else. Our ancestors took the steps to save themselves and future generations as they fled from slavery to freedom. We need to break free from the wasteful consumption that enslaves us to ensure our own survival. Energy conservation is actually an ancient mitzvah. Rav Zutra, in the Talmud (Shabbat 67b), mandates fuel efficiency saying that those who burn more fuel than necessary violate the law of not wasting (*bal tashchit*). Let us be inspired this holiday season by the simple lives our ancestors led and take action towards the greening of our homes and synagogues. ... Just as our ancestors left their footprints in the sand and greatly impacted all those who followed, we too are leaving our eco-footprints on Earth. This Passover let us step lightly and work towards removing the chametz from our world that threatens the health

of our planet and its inhabitants. And, let us convey to our children the moral and imperative message of simplicity through our deeds. Dayeinu!”
From “Green Clean - Chametz and Environmental Sustainability” by Barbara Lerman-Golomb, member of the Commission on Social Action and the Northeast Camp Commission, Director of Education and Outreach for Hazon, and an author, environmental activist and experiential educator. Posted by Religious Action Center on April 8, 2009 8:23 AM
http://blogs.rj.org/rac/2009/04/green_clean_chametz_and_enviro.html

When you prepare for Passover, do you reflect on the excesses of your own life? They may not be material; perhaps you are already a conscious consumer who does her best to act responsibly in regard to the environment. Passover has two main rules regarding around matzoh during Passover. The first is that, on the first night of Pesach, one must consume matzoh. The second is a prohibition on chametz (eating, owning, and profiting from it) that lasts for the entire holiday. If you are consuming appropriately, have you also eliminated eco-chametz for the duration of the Exodus (Passover and personal liberation from environmentally degrading practices), in material and spiritual ways?

If matzoh is the elimination of ego, what does ego have to do with the environment? The answer is: relationships. We are all in relation to our planet, and the relationship is failing. Our sibling-species are dying. Like any relationship, the one we have with our environment can be damaged by an overinflated ego. Our relationship with the earth is one-sided, and we have stopped caring about the earth’s side of the story. Like a partner who fails to listen to his mate, we are taking our “significant other” for granted. The earth is speaking to us. What is it saying?

It is saying that our most basic ways of fighting the environmental crisis are symptoms of the illness. Buying carbon credits to offset airline miles traveled, or recycling hundreds of single-use packagings weekly, for example, assumes that the systems under which we currently live are inherently healthy and sustainable (or at least, are not inherently flawed), but have been used incorrectly. It is time to question this assumption.

Environmental destruction proceeds apace in spite of all the warnings, the good science, the 501(c)3 organizations with their memberships in the millions, the poll results, and the martyrs perched high in the branches of sequoias or shot dead in the Amazon. This is so not because of a power, a strength *out there* that we must resist. It is because we are weak and fearful. Only a weak and fearful society could invest so much desperate energy in protecting activities that are the equivalent of suicide.

For instance, trading carbon emission credits and creating markets in greenhouse gases as a means of controlling global warming is not a way of saying we’re so confident in the strength of the free market system that we can even trust it to fix the problems it creates. No, it’s a way of saying that we are so frightened by the prospect of stepping outside of the market system on which we depend for our national wealth, our jobs, and our sense of normalcy that we will let the logic of that system try to correct its own excesses even when we know we’re just kidding ourselves. This delusional strategy is embedded in the Kyoto agreement, which is little more than a complex scheme to create a giant international market in pollution. Even Kyoto, of which we speak longingly—

“Oh, if only we would join it!”—is not an answer to our problem but a capitulation to it, so concerned is it to protect what it calls “economic growth and development.” Kyoto is just a form of whistling past the graveyard. And it is not just international corporations who do this whistling; we all have our own little stake in the world capitalism has made and so we all do the whistling.

The problem for even the best-intentioned environmental activism is that it imagines that it can confront a problem *external to itself*. Confront the bulldozers. Confront the chainsaws. Confront Monsanto. Fight the power. What the environmental movement is not very good at is acknowledging that *something in the very fabric of our daily life is deeply anti-nature as well as anti-human*. It inhabits not just bad-guy CEOs at Monsanto and Weyerhaeuser but nearly every working American, environmentalists included...

Besides, corporations are really powerless to be anything other than what they are. I suspect that, far from being perverse merchants of greed hell-bent on destruction, these corporate entities are as bewildered as we are. Capitalism—especially in its corporate incarnation—has a logos, a way of reasoning. Capitalism is in the position of the notorious scorpion who persuades the fox to ferry him across a river, arguing that he won’t sting the fox because it wouldn’t be in his interest to do so, since he’d drown along with the fox. But when in spite of this logic he stings the fox anyway, all he can offer in explanation is “I did it because it is in my nature.” ...

The idea that we have powerful corporate villains to thank for the sorry state of the natural world is what Francis Bacon called an “idol of the tribe.” According to Bacon, an idol is a truth based on insufficient evidence but maintained by constant affirmation within the tribe of believers. In spite of this insufficiency, idols do not fall easily or often...The idea of fallen idols always suggests tragic disillusionment, but this is in fact a good thing. If they don’t fall, there is no hope for discovering the real problems and the best and truest response to them. All environmentalists understand that the global crisis we are experiencing requires urgent action, but not everyone understands that *if our activism is driven by idols we can exhaust ourselves with effort while having very little effect on the crisis*. Most frighteningly, it is even possible that our efforts can sustain the crisis. The question the environmental tribe must ask is, do our mistaken assumptions actually cause us to conspire against our own interests?

The belief that corporate power is the unique source of our problems is not the only idol we are subject to. There is an idol even in the language we use to account for our problems. Our primary dependence on the scientific language of “environment,” “ecology,” “diversity,” “habitat,” and “ecosystem” is a way of acknowledging the superiority of the very kind of rationality that serves not only the Sierra Club but corporate capitalism as well...

I am not speaking here of all the notorious problems associated with proving scientifically the significance of environmental destruction. My concern is with the wisdom of using as our primary weapon the rhetoric and logic of the very entities we suspect of causing our problems in the first place...[T]he danger is always that eventually we come to believe this language and its mindset

ourselves...Unfortunately, it also has the consequence of turning environmentalists into quislings, collaborators, and virtuous practitioners of a cost-benefit logic figured in songbirds.

It is because we have accepted this rationalist logos as the only legitimate means of debate that we are willing to think that what we need is a balance between the requirements of human economies and the “needs” of the natural world. It’s as if we were negotiating a trade agreement with the animals and trees unlucky enough to have to share space with us. What do you need? we ask them. What are your minimum requirements? We need to know the minimum because we’re not likely to leave you more than that. We’re going to consume any “excess.” And then it occurs to us to add, unless of course you taste good. There is always room for an animal that tastes good.

We use our most basic vocabulary, words like “ecosystem,” with a complete innocence, as if we couldn’t imagine that there might be something perilous in it. What if such language were actually the announcement of the defeat of what we claim to want? That’s the worm at the heart of the rose of the “ecologist.” It is something that environmentalism has never come to terms with because the very advocates for environmental health are most comfortable with the logic of science, never mind what else that logic may be doing for the military and industry. Would people and foundations be as willing to send contributions to The Nature Conservancy or the Sierra Club if the leading logic of the organization were not “ecosystems” but “respect for life” or “reverence for creation”? ...“Let’s keep a nice, clean scientific edge between us and religion,” we protest. In the end, environmental science criticizes not only corporate destructiveness but (as it has always done) more spiritual notions of nature as well...

In short, there would be nothing inappropriate or undesirable were we to understand our relation to nature in spiritual terms or poetic terms or, with Emerson and Thoreau, in good old American transcendental terms, but there is no broadly shared language in which to do this. So we are forced to resort to what is in fact a lower common denominator: the languages of science and bureaucracy. These languages have broad legitimacy in our culture...Even now, science can’t say why we ought not to harm the environment except to say that we shouldn’t be self-destructive. Another of these lost spiritual children was our very relation as human beings to the mystery of Being as such. As the philosopher G. W. Leibniz famously wondered, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” For St. Thomas Aquinas, this was the fundamental religious question. In the place of a relation to the world that was founded on this mystery, we have a relation that is objective and data driven. We no longer have a forest; we have “board feet.” We no longer have a landscape, a world that is our own; we have “valuable natural resources.” ... Environmentalism has made a Faustian pact with quantitative reasoning; science has given it power but it cannot provide deliverance. If environmentalism truly wishes, as it claims, to want to “save” something—the planet, a species, itself—it needs to rediscover a common language of Care.

The lessons of our idols come to this: you cannot defeat something that you imagine to be an external threat to you when it is in fact internal to you, when its life is your life. And even if it were external to you, you cannot defeat an enemy by thinking in the terms it chooses, and by doing only those things that not only don't harm it but with which it is perfectly comfortable. The truth is, our idols are actually a great convenience to us. It is convenient that we can imagine a power beyond us because that means we don't have to spend much time examining our own lives. And it is very convenient that we can hand the hard work of resistance over to scientists, our designated national problem solvers.

We cannot march forth, confront, and definitively defeat the Monsantos of the world, especially not with science (which, it should go without saying, Monsanto has plenty of). We can, however, look at ourselves and see all of the ways that we conspire against what we imagine to be our own most urgent interests. Perhaps the most powerful way in which we conspire against ourselves is the simple fact that we have jobs. We are willingly part of a world designed for the convenience of what Shakespeare called "the visible G-d": money. When I say we have jobs, I mean that we find in them our home, our sense of being grounded in the world, grounded in a vast social and economic order. It is a spectacularly complex, even breathtaking, order, and it has two enormous and related problems. First, it seems to be largely responsible for the destruction of the natural world. Second, it has the strong tendency to reduce the human beings inhabiting it to two functions, working and consuming. It tends to hollow us out. It creates a hole in our sense of ourselves and of this country, and it leaves us with few alternatives but to try to fill that hole with money and the things money buys. We are not free to dismiss money because we fear that we'd disappear, we'd be nothing at all without it. Money is, in the words of Buddhist writer David Loy, "the flight from emptiness that makes life empty."

Needless to say, many people with environmental sympathies will easily agree with what I've just said and imagine that in fact they do what they can to resist work and consumption, to resist the world as arranged for the convenience of money. But here again I suspect we are kidding ourselves. Rather than taking the risk of challenging the roles money and work play in all of our lives by actually taking the responsibility for reordering our lives, the most prominent strategy of environmentalists seems to be to "give back" to nature through the bequests, the annuities, the Working Assets credit cards and long distance telephone schemes, and the socially responsible mutual funds advertised in Sierra and proliferating across the environmental movement. Such giving may make us feel better, but it will never be enough. Face it, we all have a bit of the robber baron turned philanthropist in us. We're willing to be generous in order to "save the world" but not before we've insured our own survival in the reigning system. It's not even clear that this philanthropy is a pure expression of generosity since the bequest and annuity programs are carefully measured to provide attractive tax benefits and appealing rates of return.

Even when we are trying to aid the environment, we are not willing as individuals to leave the system that we know in our heart of hearts is the cause of our problems. We are even further from knowing how to take the collective risk of leaving this system entirely and ordering our societies differently. We are not ready. Not yet, at least.

--from "The Idols of Environmentalism: Do environmentalists conspire against their own interests?" by Curtis White, published in the March/April 2007 issue of *Orion* magazine.

Maror is bitter herbs, which represent the pain of our slavery in Egypt, and the harm of our actions and our irreverence toward the planet today. These might well be the plagues of the environmental crisis, but there are many more than ten.

- Overpopulation and overcrowding
- Climate change and global warming
- Diseased agriculture and unhealthy animals and food
- Food shortages and food disparity
- Polluted oceans (2/3 of the planet)
- Deforestation, all kinds of threatened ecosystems
- Addiction to fossil fuels
- Dirty, undrinkable water that cannot sustain the life within it, water scarcity
- Unhealthy air and its health effects, like increased rates of asthma in children
- Unsustainable and inadequate energy
- Hazardous waste and bursting landfills
- Land degradation
- Healthcare affordability and a lack of public health
- Genetically modified foods
- Automobile reliance/lack of public transport
- Endangered species (disappearance of plant and animal species from the planet)
- Poverty
- War

Apply the promise of matzoh to the bitterness of maror, and what is the result?

The Prophetic Promise of Elijah: What do we do in the face of such a devastating legacy?

Remember the promise of the prophet Elijah: We can fix the world. We can have an effect on a broken planet. Envision a planet redeemed through our own actions, in the form of personal decisions and behaviors, institutional changes, and in the public world via policy change. The only difference is our understanding of the Moshiach, or the opportunity of tikkun olam. In the words of Rabbi Robert Levine, "There is no Messiah, and you're it."

And so, overpopulation and overcrowding become responsible use of land, climate change and global warming are minimized (as they cannot be stopped), our food system is made more healthy, animals are treated with respect, everyone has access to safe, healthy foods, our oceans are cleaner, the inherent value of our ecosystems and their diversity is recognized, energy is sustainable, all humans have the right to clean drinking water, we use our possessions responsibly and do not over-consume, our farmlands are conserved, all people have affordable

healthcare, it is no longer necessary for every family to own a vehicle, and resources are distributed equally: peace, shalom, wholeness.

B'khol Dor Vador - בְּכֹל־דוֹר וְדוֹר
"In Every Generation"

בְּכֹל־דוֹר וְדוֹר חַיִּי בְּאָדָם לְרֵאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ, כִּי אֱלוֹהֵי יִצְחָק מִמֶּנּוּ צָרָה יָמֵינוּ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְהִגְדַּתְּ לְבָנֶיךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעֶבְרַת זֶה עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם. לֹא אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלִבְדּוֹ, גָּאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֶל אֶפְרָיִם אוֹתָנוּ, נֹגֵף אֶל עַמֵּנוּ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִמִּצְרָיִם, לְמַעַן הִבְיִיא אֶת־נוֹ, לְתַתּוֹ לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂא עַל־לְאֲבֹתֵינוּ.

B'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo, k'ilu hu yatza mimitzrayim, shene-emar: v'higadta l'vincha bayom hahu leimor: ba-avur zeh asah Adonai li, b'tzeiti mimitzrayim. Lo et avoteinu bilvad, ga-al hakadosh Baruch hu, ela af otanu ga-al imahem, shene-emar: v'otanu hotzi misham, l'ma-an havi otanu, latet lanu et ha-arets asher nishba la-avoteinu.

Therefore we are obligated, to thank, sing the Hallel, praise, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, elevate and raise our voices for joy to G-d, who performed all these miracles for our ancestors and therefore for us!

You brought us from human servitude to freedom,
from sorrow to joy,
for a time of mourning to a festive day,
from deep darkness to great light
and from slavery to redemption!

In Your presence we renew our singing as in ancient days:
Hallel-lu-yah
Sing Hallel to G-d.

הַלֵּל - לַ

לְפִיכֶם אֲנִי חֲנוּ חַיִּים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח, לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדְרִי, לְבָרֵךְ, לְעַלֵּה וּלְקַלֵּס, לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ אֶת־כָּל־הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלֶּה. הוֹצִיאֵנוּ מֵעַבְדוּת לְחֵירוֹת, מִיַּגוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה, וּמֵאֲבֵל לְיוֹם טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גָּדוֹל, וּמִשֶּׁעָבֹד לְגָאֵלָה. וְנִאֲמַר לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ הַהַלְלוּיָהּ:

L'fichach anachnu chayavim l'hodot, l'haleil, l'shabei-ach, l'fa-eir, l'romeim, l'hadeir, l'vareich, l'aleih ul'kaleis, l'mi she-asah la-avoteinu v'lanu et kol hanisim ha-eilu. Hotzi-anu mei-avdut l'cheirut, mi-yagon l'simchah, umei-eivel l'yom tov, umei-afeilah l'or gadol, umishibud ligulah. V'nomar l'fanav shirah chadashah. hal'luyah.

Therefore it is our duty to thank and praise, pay tribute and glorify, exalt and honor, bless and acclaim the One who performed all these miracles for our ancestors and for us. G-d took us out of slavery into freedom, out of grief into joy, out of mourning into a festival, out of darkness into a great light, out of slavery into redemption. We will recite a new song before G-d! Halleluyah!

Psalm 113

הַלְלוּיָהּ. הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְיָ. הַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְיָ. יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: מִמֶּנּוּ צָרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבוֹאוֹ. מְהַלֵּל שֵׁם יְיָ. רַם עַל־כַּף־לַגְוִיִּם יְיָ. עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כִּי בִדְוִי: מִי כִּי אֵל הַיּוֹם. הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהִי לְשִׁבְתָּהּ: הַמֶּלֶךְ שֶׁפָּיִלָה לְרֵאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ: מְקִימֵי מַעְפָּר דָּל. מֵאֲשֶׁר פָּתְרוּ יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן: לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עַם־נְדִיבִים. עַם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ: מִשֵּׁיבֵי עֲקָרֹת הַבָּיִת אִם הַבָּיִת שֶׁמְחָה. הַלְלוּיָהּ

Hal'luyah, hal'lu avdei Adonai, hal'lu et sheim Adonai. Y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorach, mei-atah v'ad olam. Mimizrach shemesh ad m'vo-o, m'hulal sheim Adonai. Ram al kol goyim Adonai, al

hashamayim k'vodo. Mi k'Adonai Eloheinu, hamagbihi lashavet. Hamashpili lirot, bashamayim uva-aretz. M'kimi mei-afar dal, mei-ashpot yarim evyon. L'hoshivi im n'divim, im n'divei amo. Moshivi akeret habayit, eim habanim s'meichah, hal'luyah.

Praise the Creator! Praise, you who serve G-d, praise the name of G-d. Blessed be the name of G-d from this time forth and forever.

From the rising of the sun to its setting,

G-d's name is to be praised. High above all nations is G-d; above the heavens is G-d's glory.

Who is like G-d our G-d, who though enthroned on high, looks down upon heaven and earth?

G-d raises the poor man out of the dust and lifts the needy one out of the trash heap, to seat them with nobles, with the nobles of G-d's people. G-d turns the barren wife into a happy mother of children.

Halleluyah!

Psalm 114

בַּצֵּאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעֵד:
הֵיטָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁ. יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמֶּשֶׁל לֹוֹתָיו:
הַיָּם רָאָה וַיִּבֹּס, הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֹר:
הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְאֵילִים. גְּבְעוֹת כַּבְּנֵי־צֹאן:
מֵהַלַּךְ הַיָּם כִּי תָנוּס. הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּסַּב לְאַחֹר:
הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְאֵילִים. גְּבְעוֹת כַּבְּנֵי־צֹאן:
מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ. מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
הַיָּם הִצִּיר אֶגְמוֹתָיִם. חַלְמֵי־שָׁמַיִם לִמְעֵינֹוֹתָיִם.

B'tzeit yisra-eil mimitzrayim, beit ya-akov mei-am loeiz.

Hay'tah y'hudah l'kod'sho, yisra-eil mamsh'lotav.

Hayam ra-ah vayanos, hayardein yisov l'achor.

Heharim rak'du ch'eilim, g'va-ot kivnei tzon.

Mah l'cha hayam ki tanus, hayardein tisov l'achor.

He-harim tirk'du ch'eilim, g'va-ot kivnei tzon.

Milifnei adon chuli aretz, milifnei eloha ya-akov.

Hahof'chi hatzur agam mayim, chalamish l'may'no mayim.

When Israel went out of Egypt,

When the household of Jacob left a people with a strange tongue,

Judah became the place from which G-d's holiness went forth,

Israel became the seat from which the world would know of G-d's rule.

The sea looked and fled, The Jordan reversed its curse.

Mountains skipped like rams and the hills jumped about like young lambs.

What is happening that you turn back, O sea,

Jordan, why do you reverse your course?

Mountains, why do you skip like rams

And hills why do you jump like lambs?

You are beholding the face of your Creator,

Before G-d, before the G-d of Jacob,

Turning rocks into swirling waters

and stone into a flowing spring.

Kos Sheinee - כּוֹס שֵׁינֵי

Second Cup of Wine

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר גָּאֵלְנוּ וְגָאֵל אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהֵגַד יַעֲנוּ לָלַיְלָה הַזֶּה, לְאֶכְלֹבוּ מַצָּה וּמַרֹר. כֵּן, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יִגְיַענוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים וְלְרִגְלִים אַחֲרִים, הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאֵתְנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. שְׂמֵחִים בְּבִנְיַן עִירָךְ, וְשֵׁשׁ יָמִים בְּעִבּוּדְךָ, וְנֹאכַל שָׂם מִן הַזֵּבָחִים וּמִן הַפְּסָחִים] בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבַּת אוֹמְרִים מִן הַפְּסָחִים וּמִן הַזֵּבָחִים [, אֲשֶׁר יִגְיַע דָּמָם, עַל קִיר מִזְבֵּחַךְ לְרִצּוֹן, וְנוֹדֶה לְךָ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גְּאֻלְתְּנוּ, וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשֵׁנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher g'alanu v'ga-al et avoteinu mimitzrayim, v'higi-anu l'lalaylah hazeh, le-echol bo matzoh u-maror. Kein, Adonai Eloheinu veilohei avoteinu, yagi-einu l'moadim v'lirgalim acheirim, ha-ba-im likrateinu l'shalom. S'meichim b'vinyan irecha, v'sasim ba-avodatecha, v'nochal sham min haz'vachim umin hap'sachim [On Saturday night substitute: min hap'sachim umin haz'vachim], asher yagi-a damam, al kir mizbachacha l'ratzon, v'nodeh l'cha shir chadash al g'ulateinu, v'al p'dut nafsheinu. Baruch atah Adonai, ga-al yisra-eil.
Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who has redeemed us and our ancestors from Egypt and enabled us to reach this night that we may eat matzo and maror. Our G-d and the G-d of our ancestors, enable us to reach also the forthcoming holidays and festivals in peace, rejoicing in the rebuilding of Zion your city, and joyful at your service. There we shall eat of the offerings and Passover sacrifices (On Saturday night read: of the Passover sacrifices and offerings) which will be acceptably placed upon your altar. We shall sing a new hymn of praise to you for our redemption and for our liberation. Praised are you, G-d, who has redeemed Israel.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine.

רַחֲצָה - Rachtzah Lave/Washing

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who sanctified us with his commandment to wash our hands.

Rachtzah, the second hand washing completed during the seder, is the only one that requires a blessing. There is a lesson here: our hands take action, and that action and those hands are made more meaningful when we consider them capable of creating change in a holy way.

Do something blessed with your hands. This is a call to action. We know there is much work to be done, and that the responsibility is ours. Martha Graham wrote to Agnes DeMille, "There is no satisfaction whatever at any time. There is only a queer, divine dissatisfaction, a blessed unrest that keeps us marching - and makes us more alive than the others." Paul Hawken, an environmentalist, entrepreneur, journalist, and author, wrote a book entitled *Blessed Unrest* after this quote, and what follows here is from his commencement address to the Class of 2009 at the University of Portland on May 3, 2009.

Let's begin with the startling part. Class of 2009: you are going to have to figure out what it means to be a human being on earth at a time when every living system is declining, and the rate of decline is accelerating. Kind of a mind-boggling situation...but not one peer-reviewed paper published in the last thirty

years can refute that statement. Basically, civilization needs a new operating system, you are the programmers, and we need it within a few decades.

This planet came with a set of instructions, but we seem to have misplaced them. Important rules like don't poison the water, soil, or air, don't let the earth get overcrowded, and don't touch the thermostat have been broken. Buckminster Fuller said that spaceship earth was so ingeniously designed that no one has a clue that we are on one, flying through the universe at a million miles per hour, with no need for seatbelts, lots of room in coach, and really good food—but all that is changing.

There is invisible writing on the back of the diploma you will receive, and in case you didn't bring lemon juice to decode it, I can tell you what it says: You are Brilliant, and the Earth is Hiring. The earth couldn't afford to send recruiters or limos to your school. It sent you rain, sunsets, ripe cherries, night blooming jasmine, and that unbelievably cute person you are dating. Take the hint. And here's the deal: Forget that this task of planetsaving is not possible in the time required. Don't be put off by people who know what is not possible. Do what needs to be done, and check to see if it was impossible only after you are done.

When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: If you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren't pessimistic, you don't understand the data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren't optimistic, you haven't got a pulse. What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world. The poet Adrienne Rich wrote, "So much has been destroyed I have cast my lot with those who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world." There could be no better description. Humanity is coalescing. It is reconstituting the world, and the action is taking place in schoolrooms, farms, jungles, villages, campuses, companies, refugee camps, deserts, fisheries, and slums.

You join a multitude of caring people. No one knows how many groups and organizations are working on the most salient issues of our day: climate change, poverty, deforestation, peace, water, hunger, conservation, human rights, and more. This is the largest movement the world has ever seen. Rather than control, it seeks connection. Rather than dominance, it strives to disperse concentrations of power. Like Mercy Corps, it works behind the scenes and gets the job done. Large as it is, no one knows the true size of this movement. It provides hope, support, and meaning to billions of people in the world. Its clout resides in idea, not in force. It is made up of teachers, children, peasants, businesspeople, rappers, organic farmers, nuns, artists, government workers, fisherfolk, engineers, students, incorrigible writers, weeping Muslims, concerned mothers, poets, doctors without borders, grieving Christians, street musicians, the President of the United States of America, and as the writer

David James Duncan would say, the Creator, the One who loves us all in such a huge way.

There is a rabbinical teaching that says if the world is ending and the Messiah arrives, first plant a tree, and then see if the story is true. Inspiration is not garnered from the litanies of what may befall us; it resides in humanity's willingness to restore, redress, reform, rebuild, recover, re-imagine, and reconsider. "One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began, though the voices around you kept shouting their bad advice," is Mary Oliver's description of moving away from the profane toward a deep sense of connectedness to the living world.

Millions of people are working on behalf of strangers, even if the evening news is usually about the death of strangers. This kindness of strangers has religious, even mythic origins, and very specific eighteenth-century roots. Abolitionists were the first people to create a national and global movement to defend the rights of those they did not know. Until that time, no group had filed a grievance except on behalf of itself. The founders of this movement were largely unknown — Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, Josiah Wedgwood — and their goal was ridiculous on the face of it: at that time three out of four people in the world were enslaved. Enslaving each other was what human beings had done for ages. And the abolitionist movement was greeted with incredulity. Conservative spokesmen ridiculed the abolitionists as liberals, progressives, do-gooders, meddlers, and activists. They were told they would ruin the economy and drive England into poverty. But for the first time in history a group of people organized themselves to help people they would never know, from whom they would never receive direct or indirect benefit. And today tens of millions of people do this every day. It is called the world of non-profits, civil society, schools, social entrepreneurship, non-governmental organizations, and companies who place social and environmental justice at the top of their strategic goals. The scope and scale of this effort is unparalleled in history.

The living world is not "out there" somewhere, but in your heart. What do we know about life? In the words of biologist Janine Benyus, life creates the conditions that are conducive to life. I can think of no better motto for a future economy. We have tens of thousands of abandoned homes without people and tens of thousands of abandoned people without homes. We have failed bankers advising failed regulators on how to save failed assets. We are the only species on the planet without full employment. Brilliant. We have an economy that tells us that it is cheaper to destroy earth in real time rather than renew, restore, and sustain it. You can print money to bail out a bank but you can't print life to bail out a planet. At present we are stealing the future, selling it in the present, and calling it gross domestic product. We can just as easily have an economy that is based on healing the future instead of stealing it. We can either create assets for the future or take the assets of the future. One is called restoration and the other exploitation. And whenever we exploit the earth we exploit people and

cause untold suffering. Working for the earth is not a way to get rich, it is a way to be rich.

The first living cell came into being nearly 40 million centuries ago, and its direct descendants are in all of our bloodstreams. Literally you are breathing molecules this very second that were inhaled by Moses, Mother Teresa, and Bono. We are vastly interconnected. Our fates are inseparable. We are here because the dream of every cell is to become two cells. And dreams come true. In each of you are one quadrillion cells, 90 percent of which are not human cells. Your body is a community, and without those other microorganisms you would perish in hours. Each human cell has 400 billion molecules conducting millions of processes between trillions of atoms. The total cellular activity in one human body is staggering: one septillion actions at any one moment, a one with twenty-four zeros after it. In a millisecond, our body has undergone ten times more processes than there are stars in the universe, which is exactly what Charles Darwin foretold when he said science would discover that each living creature was a "little universe, formed of a host of self-propagating organisms, inconceivably minute and as numerous as the stars of heaven."

So I have two questions for you all: First, can you feel your body? Stop for a moment. Feel your body. One septillion activities going on simultaneously, and your body does this so well you are free to ignore it, and wonder instead when this speech will end. You can feel it. It is called life. This is who you are. Second question: who is in charge of your body? Who is managing those molecules? Hopefully not a political party. Life is creating the conditions that are conducive to life inside you, just as in all of nature. Our innate nature is to create the conditions that are conducive to life. What I want you to imagine is that collectively humanity is evincing a deep innate wisdom in coming together to heal the wounds and insults of the past.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once asked what we would do if the stars only came out once every thousand years. No one would sleep that night, of course. The world would create new religions overnight. We would be ecstatic, delirious, made rapturous by the glory of G-d. Instead, the stars come out every night and we watch television. This extraordinary time when we are globally aware of each other and the multiple dangers that threaten civilization has never happened, not in a thousand years, not in ten thousand years. Each of us is as complex and beautiful as all the stars in the universe. We have done great things and we have gone way off course in terms of honoring creation. You are graduating to the most amazing, stupefying challenge ever bequeathed to any generation. The generations before you failed. They didn't stay up all night. They got distracted and lost sight of the fact that life is a miracle every moment of your existence. Nature beckons you to be on her side. You couldn't ask for a better boss. The most unrealistic person in the world is the cynic, not the dreamer. Hope only makes sense when it doesn't make sense to be hopeful. This is your century. Take it and run as if your life depends on it.

Motzee - Matzah - מוֹצֵיָא מַצָּה

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לָחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who brings forth sustenance from the earth.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzoh.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who sanctified us with your commandment to eat matzoh.

(Eat matzoh!)

Notice the blessing for “motzi.” It thanks G-d for producing bread from the Earth, an ancient statement that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all things and of our ultimate reliance upon the planet for our sustenance and our lives.

Most of us think of ourselves as “breadwinners.” We go to work, earn money, and buy our food, or we get the ingredients together to create bread ourselves, if we are highly motivated.

Kneading the dough, watching it rise, and baking it into a meal for our family is akin to a miracle for those with little time to cook. How much bread could we truly make completely on our own, though? Not a single cake of even matzoh, the simplest bread, could be prepared without the “miracle” of Creation. Without the generous gifts of the planet, human beings would not exist. Not only do we owe the earth thanks for our food, we owe also gratitude for our lives, and for our ancestors—our tradition. Despite the taboo in Judaism against anything reminiscent of paganism or nature-worship, it makes sense to give thanks to the planet for all we have. A good start is the blessing for birchat hachamah, blessing of the sun that takes place only once every twenty-eight years.

“Blessed are you, G-d of the universe, who sets in motion the work of creation.”

As the seder participants eat their matzoh, circle the table and give an account of your thanks to the planet.

If we were attending a seder during the time of the temple in Jerusalem, a third blessing would be recited, that over the Paschal sacrifice. At our seder, the plate holds a symbol only of the ancient sacrifice, which was brought each Passover to the Temple. The Hebrew word for sacrifice is korban, which comes from the root meaning “near.” What “sacrifices” could bring you closer to your environmental and spiritual goals, and how do those goals reflect upon each other?

In the Mishnah (Pesachim 9:10), the ancient Jewish Oral Tradition, there is a section that addresses the holiday of Passover. There we find a discussion about what happens if two groups of people lose their sacred holiday offering. They each pick a paschal sacrifice and then say to each other: “If this Passover sacrifice is ours, you withdraw from yours, and you are subscribed with us; and if this Passover sacrifice is yours, we withdraw from ours, and we are subscribed with you.” Here we discover a model for two groups of people sharing something they hold sacrosanct...

--from “Zionism and power” by Rabbi Michael Cohen, published on 29 May 2008 in *Jordan Times*

This teaching from our tradition indicates that our spirituality can, and should, incorporate practical measures of sharing and efficiency. When we encounter a problem of limited resources, we are obliged to divide what is available between everyone with need. Obviously, this has environmental implications. We have entered a time of incredible tension with the planet. We have consumed her resources indiscriminately, and now there is a lack. Yet, more humans than ever require the environment's gifts in order to survive. What we must do, if we follow this holy example, is to equally divide what is available, and ask that all groups respect the limits of the event. Consider what you can share in order to lift the burden of our environment. Obviously, we can all share our money and time, according to our abilities. However, imagine what material goods are replicated around your home and neighborhood which could be easily shared. Do you have several of a single type of appliance, which could be donated to a shelter or thrift store? Does everyone on your street own their own snowblower and lawn mower? Most of us have items we need only occasionally cluttering our storage spaces. What's stopping you from forming a lawn and garden or home maintenance co-op with your neighbors and friends?

Maror/Bitter Herbs - מָרוֹר

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר:
Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror. Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who sanctified us with your commandment to eat the bitter herb.

We eat maror, the bitter herbs, to remind us of slavery. Perhaps a better symbol of slavery, for contemporary seders, would be chocolate and coffee, two foods that mix sweet and bitter flavors to sensuous and rich results. Aside from their deliciousness and caffeination, what do you know about the chocolate treats in which you indulge and the morning coffee you see as a necessity? How are they related to the bitterness of slavery? And what does any of this have to do with the environment?

What do coffee and chocolate have in common besides caffeine, some reputed health benefits and a desirable flavor? They are both popular in developed countries but grown largely in the developing world. Both are derived from what are known as beans, and both are traditionally grown in the shady understory of tropical rainforests, sharing their homes with a plethora of wildlife, from howler monkeys to parrots. Cocoa beans are produced by the cacao tree (*Theobroma cacao*) and can only be grown 20 degrees from the equator (see "En-lightened Indulgence," *Eating Right*, July/August 2001).

The history of cocoa bean harvesting has been dark. About 70 percent of the world's crop is grown in West Africa, where, according to Rainforest Alliance's Chris Wille, "Really bad things have happened that now haunt the entire industry." In 2001, the U.S. State Department documented child slavery on Ivory Coast cocoa farms. Although the practice was never common and may have been overblown in some media accounts, "Other egregious forms of child labor are unfortunately widespread," reports Global Exchange. Today, hundreds of thousands of children continue to work in African cocoa farms, often doing dangerous jobs and lacking access to education. Although chocolate is highly

profitable for major food companies, the average West African may only take home \$30 to \$108 per year from the market.

And there are other parallels with coffee: As demand rose for chocolate, farmers began replacing native shade-grown cocoa with a high-yield, low-quality hybrid that can be grown in open fields with the help of industrial chemicals. According to Rainforest Alliance, the switch has led to increased erosion and run-off, deforestation and reduction of wildlife habitat.

In response to these unsustainable practices, many cooperatives and coalitions have sprung up. Since 1997, Rainforest Alliance has been working with partners such as Conservacion y Desarrollo through its Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) to restore sustainable cocoa farming practices in Ecuador. SAN works to help communities employ traditional methods of farming and organizes cooperatives to share processing facilities. The sustainable cocoa program includes standards for worker treatment and conservation of wildlife, water and soil. Fair Trade and organic certified chocolates are also now increasingly available from a number of companies, ensuring that rigorous standards are met in terms of social and environmental responsibility. Producers include Newman's Own, Dagoba, Equal Exchange, Ithaca Fine Chocolates and Yachana Gourmet. CONTACT Global Exchange (maintains links to places to buy sustainable chocolate), (415)558-9486, www.globalexchange.org.

--"Chocolate's Dark Side." By: Slomkowski, Kate, *E - The Environmental Magazine*, 10468021, Nov/Dec2005, Vol. 16, Issue 6

Of course, the Torah allowed slavery. Today, we recognize the abhorrence of the practice even when cloaked in terms like "indentured servitude." Though the Torah regulated the treatment of slaves, there are no excuses to be made: Jews have owned slaves and were involved in the slave trade. Maimonides, however, placed strict constraints on slave ownership.

It is permissible to work a non-Jewish servant harshly. Yet, although this is the law, the way of the pious and the wise is to be compassionate and to pursue justice, not to overburden or oppress a servant, and to provide them from every dish and every drink.

The early sages would give their servants from every dish on their table. They would feed their animals and their servants before sitting to their own meals. Does it not say (Psalms 123:2), "As the eyes of the servant to the hand of his master; as the eyes of the maid to her mistress [so our eyes are towards the Lord our G-d...]"?

So, too, you should not denigrate a servant, neither physically nor verbally. The Torah made him your servant to do work, not to be disgraced. Do not treat him with constant screaming and anger, rather speak with him pleasantly and listen to his complaints. Such were the good ways in which Job took pride when he said, "Did I ever despise the judgment of my servant and my maid when they argued with me? Did not my Maker make him, too, in the belly; did not the same One form us both in the womb?"

For anger and cruelty are only found among other nations. The children of Abraham, our father--and they are Israel, to whom the Holy One, blessed be He, has provided the goodness of Torah and commanded us righteous judgments

and statutes--they are compassionate to all. This is one of the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He, that we are commanded to emulate (Psalms 145:9): "And He has compassion for all He has made."
Furthermore, all who have compassion will be treated compassionately, as was stated (Deuteronomy 13:18), "He will give you compassion and He will have compassion upon you and multiply you."
(*Mishneh Torah, Laws of Indentured Servants, 9:8*)

Despite Maimonides' apologetics (and ethnocentrism), we recognize an important point within his words: an emphasis on compassion. We must delve into the deepest tensions of Judaism to get to the roots of compassion and freedom. Jews have been at the forefront of many civil rights movements, but we must "stop patting ourselves on the back for "marching in the '60s" and focus on the challenges facing us today." (Rabbi Susan Talve, "Synagogue: Breaking the Color Barrier," in *Reform Jewish Magazine*; Spring 2010) How can we rationalize our consumption of cheap chocolate and coffee, made affordable on the backs of impoverished families? As Jews, especially at this time of year, we celebrate freedom from slavery. How free are we, when our Passover desserts and drinks enslaved another?

Earlier in the seder, we asked, "How is this night different?" Now let us ask, "How will we be different, after this night?" One easy way to make a big difference to agricultural workers in developing nations is to pay "extra" for Fair Trade products.

Fair Trade is, fundamentally, a response to the failure of conventional trade to deliver sustainable livelihoods and development opportunities to people in the poorest countries of the world; this is evidenced by the two billion of our fellow citizens who, despite working extremely hard, survive on less than us\$2 per day. Poverty and hardship limit people's choices while market forces tend to further marginalise and exclude them. This makes them vulnerable to exploitation, whether as farmers and artisans in family-based production units or as hired workers within larger businesses...

The Fair Trade movement shares a vision of a world in which justice and sustainable development are at the heart of trade structures and practices so that everyone, through their work, can maintain a decent and dignified livelihood and develop their full human potential.

The Fair Trade movement believes that trade can be a fundamental driver of poverty reduction and greater sustainable development, but only if it is managed for that purpose, with greater equity and transparency than is currently the norm. We believe that the marginalised and disadvantaged can develop the capacity to take more control over their work and their lives if they are better organised, resourced and supported, and can secure access to mainstream markets under fair trading conditions.

We also believe that people and institutions in the developed world are supportive of trading in this way when they are informed of the needs of producers and the opportunities that Fair Trade offers to change and improve their situation. Fair Trade is driven by informed consumer choices, which provides crucial support for wider campaigning to reform international trade rules and create a fairer economic system...

The currently accepted definition of Fair Trade is as follows: "Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks

greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade Organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.”

Fair Trade products are produced and traded in accordance with these principles – wherever possible verified by credible, independent assurance systems.

- Market access for marginalised producers
- Sustainable and equitable trading relationships
- Capacity building & empowerment
- Consumer awareness raising & advocacy
- Fair trade as a “social contract”

Decent Working Conditions As Defined In Ilo Conventions

Basic Principle: Employment is freely chosen and the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining are respected. (*ilo Conventions Nos. 29, 97 & 98,105*)

Additional Fair Trade Dimension: Organisation of producers and workers is integral to the developmental objectives of Fair Trade and is positively and actively encouraged. Fair Trade Organizations support capacity building in producer organisations.

Basic Principle: Decent working conditions are provided including the right to a safe and hygienic environment, working hours are not excessive and no harsh or inhumane treatments are allowed.

Additional Fair Trade Dimension: Transparent and fair trading terms enable and support compliance with decent working conditions. These are based on written contracts which assure compliance with these principles, specify the mutually agreed price and payment conditions, including prepayment where requested by producers, and take into account sufficient lead time to allow for production without excessive working hours, at the same time as seasonal factors affecting the producer. Workers are supported in actively improving health and safety conditions.

Basic Principle: There is no discrimination in any aspect of employment, including hiring, remuneration, promotion or termination, based on race, caste, national origin, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation. (*ilo Conventions Nos. 100 & 111*)

Additional Fair Trade Dimension: Improving the relative position of women and of other disadvantaged groups is a critical element in development.

Opportunities for groups that are underrepresented in skilled occupations or in leadership positions to develop their capacity for such work are actively pursued. Women receive equal pay to men for equivalent work, and fully participate in decisions concerning the use of benefits accruing from production and from Fair Trade relationships.

Basic Principle: The rights of children are respected. (*ilo Conventions Nos. 138 & 182*)

Additional Fair Trade Dimension: The importance of children's involvement in the work of family-based production units, and the learning of skills required for their working life is recognised, but any involvement must be disclosed and monitored and must not adversely affect the child's well-being, security, educational opportunities and need for play.

Environmental Sustainability

Basic Principle: Continuous improvement of the environmental impact of production and trade.

Additional Fair Trade Dimension: All parties to Fair Trade relationships collaborate on continual improvement on the environmental impact of production and trade through efficient use of raw materials from sustainable sources, reducing use of energy from non-renewable sources, and improving waste management. Adoption of organic production processes in agriculture (over time and subject to local conditions) is encouraged.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Basic Principle: Compliance and impact are verified through monitoring and evaluation.

Additional Fair Trade Dimension: Fair Trade is a system for development among producers, not a risk-management or marketing tool for buyers, although demonstrating compliance and impact are important elements in building and retaining the trust of buyers and end consumers. Monitoring and evaluation processes should reflect these aims and should be developed and operated in a participative manner, with measures in place to encourage the involvement of small-scale and marginalised producers, and to compensate them for their costs. Monitoring and evaluation processes should be useful for all participants in measuring progress and identifying areas for improvement.

--*Charter of Fair Trade Principles*, January 2009; Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International

כּוֹרֵךְ - Korekh/Hillel Sandwich

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּיל: כֵּן עָשָׂה הַלֵּל בַּזְמַן שֶׁבֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיָּם. הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ פֶּסַח מִצָּה וּמָרֹר וְאוֹכֵל בַּיּוֹחַד. לְקַיֵּים מַה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: עַל־מִצּוֹת וּמָרֹרִים יֵאָכְלֶהוּ:

Zeicher l'mikdash k'hileil. Kein asah hileil bizman shebeit hamikdash hayah kayam. Hayah koreich pesach, matzoh, u-maror v'ochail b'yachad. L'kayeim mah shene-emar. "Al matzot um'rorim yochlu-hu."

This way of eating matzoh, maror and charoset reminds us of how Hillel would do so when the Second Temple still existed, making a sandwich of the Paschal lamb, matzoh and maror, fulfilling the Torah injunction: "with matzot and maror they shall eat the Paschal lamb."

שׁוּלְחַן עוֹרֵךְ - Shulchan Orekh/The Festive Meal

Finally, we have reached the festive meal. When do we eat? Now! What we eat has become a much more complicated matter in the last decade. While enjoying matzoh ball soup and tzimmes, discuss the following questions: What should we eat? What are the implications of applying the concept of baal tashchit (the commandment not to destroy) to our food choices? Furthermore, does baal tashchit conflict with the principle of VeNishmartem et Nafshoteichem (guarding our lives)? We are commanded to live simply and taught that unnecessary spending is waste, which is destruction. The "food issue" has been criticized as "problem of privilege." Are expensive organic vegetables or pricey local meats and dairy a violation of the mitzvah to live without ostentation?

The Talmud (Babylonian Talmud, Maakos 24a) states that the prophet Micah (6:8) reduced the Torah to three major principles: "What does the Lord require of you: only to do justice, to love acts of kindness, and to walk discreetly before your G-d." The Talmud says that 'walking discreetly' before G-d refers to funerals and weddings; "If in matters that are generally not done in private the Torah says that one should 'walk discreetly,' how much more so in matters that usually call for modesty should certainly be done so." There are many interpretations of this Talmudic statement, the Etz Yosef interprets this as referring to moderation when making funerals and weddings, i.e., one should live a life of moderation and not be ostentatious, even when making funerals and weddings.

--from Friedman, H. H. (2002) *The Simple Life: The Case Against Ostentation in Jewish Law*, Jewish Law, July 2002,
<http://www.jlaw.com/Articles/againstosten.html> (*Books and Publications: Other Article*) 2002

There are, to be sure, certain instances where the *Talmud* does appear to come close to a maximalist approach to *bal tashchit*...R. Hisda also said: When one can eat [cheaper] barley bread but eats [more expensive] wheaten bread he violates "Thou shalt not destroy." R. Papa said: When one can drink [cheaper] beer but drinks [more expensive] wine, he violates "Thou shalt not destroy." But this is incorrect: "Thou shalt not destroy," as applied to one's own person, stands higher...the body must take precedence, so *more expensive but more nutritious foods are not only permitted but quite possibly required*.

--from "A Critical Examination of the Jewish Environmental Law of Bal Tashchit "Do Not Destroy"" 18 *Geo. Int'l Env'tl. L. Rev.* 335; Winter, 2006 by David Nir.
(Emphasis mine)

Thus, it is acceptable according to halachah to eat foods that are more expensive, as long as we are doing what is best for our own health. Of course, the health of the planet and our personal health are related. Just consider the relationship of pollution rates and asthma cases (See D'Amato, G. "Environmental urban factors (air pollution and allergens) and the rising trends in allergic respiratory diseases." *Allergy*. 2002, 57 Suppl 72:30-3.) or meat consumption and occurrence of cancer (Thorogood M, Mann J, Appleby P, McPherson K. Risk of death from cancer and ischaemic heart disease in meat and non-meat eaters. *Br Med J* 1994; 308:1667-70). It is not, then, considered wasteful (or destruction) to buy organic vegetables, locally-raised meat, or hormone and antibiotic-free dairy. The flip side of this argument, though, is that we have a responsibility to our own bodies, and if we can afford to do so, we should be considering the issues around "factory food." This matter is addressed by eco-kashrut.

What is eco-kashrut? The following is a simplification of the concept into a few principles.

1. Eco-kashrut is **kosher + organic/local/cage-free**, *not* a replacement of traditional kashrut.
2. Eating organic and local is easier if you allow what is available to decide the menu. Planning the menu first (as for a traditional holiday meal) limits options and means **compromise** on how local and organic you can be.
3. Eco-kashrut includes using what you have and **limiting consumption**, not just buying new (even if recycled, organic, etc.).
4. It is 100% easier to eat eco-kosher if you are also eating **vegetarian**. Eco-kosher "meat" takes a *lot* of planning, money, and generally, several interested parties.
5. Eco-kashrut does not begin and end with food—it includes *all* **consumption** (and disposal).

The eco-kosher movement was begun by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, and his book *Jewish with Feeling*, especially Chapter 5, "A New Kind of Kosher," explains the idea. Reb Zalman is the person who originally envisioned, in the 1970's, a new kind of kashrut. Though he was ordained as an Orthodox rabbi, Reb Zalman has since created the Jewish Renewal movement. The Rabbi's hope is to enliven contemporary Judaism, which he compares to a tree. Tradition is the "old wood" at the center of the tree trunk. Change, innovation, and the application of tradition to contemporary challenges is the outermost ring of that tree, which is where growth takes place. (149)

Reb Zalman believes that events like the Holocaust and the use of nuclear weapons during war have created an "Us versus Them" essence to our thought, which allows human beings to pollute the earth. Now that we are relatively safe from the threat of immediate death due to nuclear war and the Sho'ah, we have noticed a slow death taking place, that of our planet. Reb Zalman urges Jews to view the whole earth, not just Israel, as the promised land.

In Judaism, we find commandments to let the land lay fallow, free slaves, return lands to their ancestral owners, treat animals humanely, and encourage diversity of plant life. In the tradition, we find the basis for a Jewish response to contemporary issues, like pollution and animal welfare. We can use these principles to address what traditional kashrut does not—the "wider repercussions of some of our actions." Reb Zalman hopes we will apply "the ancient ways of thoughtful consumption and avoidance of cruelty and violence" to our food choices, and beyond. (157) Eco-kashrut moves from what we put into our mouths to what we put on our bodies to the types of transportation we use. Both a product's origins and its affects are considered. Eco-kashrut has gradations (more or less kosher) while traditional kashrut is binary (kosher or not).

Arthur Waskow is also an expert on eco-kashrut, and his book, *Down to Earth Judaism*, contains a section entitled, "What is Eco-Kosher?" The first task Waskow took up in the text was defining kashrut and eco-kashrut. He says an item is kosher when it has been created or prepared according to the "traditional law code of proper ritual slaughter, proper separation of meat and milk, [and] proper tithing of fruit." Eco-kosher, on the other hand, includes a "broader sense of good everyday practice that draws on the wellsprings of Jewish wisdom and tradition about the relationships between human beings and the earth." (117)

Waskow believes eco-kashrut is about asking questions about a product and ourselves before purchasing. These questions include:

What types of food and food preparation processes protect the earth, rather than harming it?
How much energy was used? How much paper should I be using? How should I invest my

money? What type of machine can I purchase for my home or office is the most environmentally friendly? (121)

Waskow breaks down eco-kashrut into traditional Jewish ethical categories. The first is “concern for the 'distress of those who possess life'” which may entail elimination of factory farms or vegetarianism. The second is “‘not ruining’ the earth” which describes the protection of the environment. He also includes “protection of one’s own body,” ostensibly from the deleterious effects of foods with hormones or pesticides. He believes in “sharing food with the poor,” and indicates our inequitable distribution of protein and the high cost and minimal availability of fresh produce in inner cities is immoral. Finally, Waskow believes “when we eat we must consciously affirm a sense of holiness and blessing” by being aware and being respectful that we must kill or harm for our own survival. (122)

There are many values that are balanced in determining the eco-kosher status of a product, including its carbon footprint, whether it was grown organically, and the wages of the harvesters. He insists that the principles may not stop at what we consume by eating, but should be applied to our whole lives. (123) Waskow conceived of the eco-kosher project, which questions how food and other consumables are grown, harvested, created, prepared, packaged, and marketed. He places a heavy emphasis on conservation, recycling, and creative re-use. He hopes each home, synagogue and business will overhaul their processes and create reachable, annual goals in regard to consumption, energy, and recycling. (127)

“Any food that satisfies the requirements of Jewish law is fit for eating; it is kosher,” says Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin¹. He does not specifically mention that those laws must be the Jewish *dietary* laws. Is it possible that other laws, not originally intended to be applied to our food, should be considered when making decisions of kashrut? This could include the principle of “bal tashchit,” or “do not destroy.” The commandment was originally applied only to the enemy’s fruit trees during times of war; however, it has since been expanded to include *any* needless destruction.² Additionally, many believe the principle of “tsar baalei chayyim,” or the prevention of pain to living creatures, necessarily prevents us from eating meat at all, much less factory farmed flesh.³ It’s easy to imagine applying “sh’mirat haguf,” the charge to guard and keep one’s own health. But, because these are not Jewish *dietary* laws, many believe Jews are allowed, by halachah (and thus by G-d), to eat whatever has the Orthodox Union seal on it.

¹Cassel, Scott. "Kosher Natural Products on the Rise." The Jewish Advocate 25 Mar. 1993. 4 Mar. 2008 <<http://www.thejewishadvocate.com/>>.

²Cohen, Jeremy. "On Classical Judaism and Environmental Crisis." Judaism and Environmental Ethics. Ed. Martin Yaffe. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001. 74-78.

³Koenig, Leah. "Conscious Carving." American Jewish Life (2008). 5 Mar. 2008 <<http://www.ajlmagazine.com/>>.

What exactly is eco-kashrut? What determines whether a product is eco-kosher or not? On what principles is eco-kashrut based? One definition I’ve referenced before is that eco-kosher is a “broader sense of good everyday practice that draws on the wellsprings of Jewish wisdom and tradition about the relationships between human beings and the earth.”¹ It integrates ecology, vegetarianism, nonviolence, and feminism, and requires that “ethical considerations” be the basis for whether an item is permissible to use or eat. Thus, eco-kashrut does not stop at food; it embraces all consumables. For example, the types of energy we use, and the clothing we wear are included. While it is based in Jewish tradition (“Question what you eat”), it incorporates contemporary issues. Traditional kashrut focuses on the origin of a product, and is binary (an

item cannot be partially or kind-of kosher).² Eco-kashrut questions both the origin and the effects or the results of a consumable product while having many layers, or levels, of kashrut, due to the many aspects considered. Finally, eco-kashrut is said by some to be “a matter of personal conscience [only]” while others believe it should be considered halachah.³

The main purpose of traditional and eco-kashrut is the application of the divine to the commonplace. With the principles mentioned earlier, “everyday” rituals of cooking and eating are elevated into thoughtful and deliberate actions.⁴ Proponents of eco-kashrut do not hope to displace traditional kashrut; instead, they hope to incorporate green “agricultural practices, [better] treatment of animals, [and improved] worker's rights and wages” and encourage broader practice of kosher principles. At the core, both proponents of traditional and eco-kashrut hope to infuse their food choices with integrity. Traditional kashrut does this by appealing to holiness and G-d, eco-kashrut by encouraging people to question the “consequences of [their food's] production, shipment, and consumption.” At root is the principle of connection. Those practicing either form of kashrut have overcome a sort of cognitive dissonance over the relatedness of food, “the natural [world], the human, and the divine.”⁵ Eco-kashrut adds the phrase “and produced by a company that respects its workers and the environment” to the statement, “This is kosher.”⁶

¹Waskow, Arthur. "What is Eco-Kosher." Down to Earth Judaism. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1995. 117-129.

²Gottlieb, Lynn. "Eco-Kashrut: Loving the Earth's Body." She Who Dwells Within. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995. 171-194.³Schachter-Shalomi, Zalman. "A New Kind of Kosher." Jewish with Feeling. New York: Penguin Group, 2005. 149-180.

⁴Cassel, Scott. "Kosher Natural Products on the Rise." The Jewish Advocate 25 Mar. 1993. 4 Mar. 2008 <<http://www.thejewishadvocate.com/>>.

⁵Lyons, Gila. "Movement Has Jews Eating Eco-Kosher." The Jewish Advocate 198 (2007): 8. 4 Mar. 2008 <<http://www.thejewishadvocate.com/>>.

⁶Cooperman, Alan. "Eco-Kosher Movement Aims to Heed Tradition, Conscience." Washington Post 7 July 2007. 3 Mar. 2008 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>>.

We should question whether eco-kashrut can appropriately be addressed with a rabbinic certification like that of hechsher tzedek, which aims to be the Orthodox Union certification of eco-kashrut. After all, couldn't the same food or product be eco-kosher in one place but “eco-treyf” in another? Take the example of organically-grown vegetables. If they're flown thousands of miles to be sold at a store that mistreats its workers, should they still be considered eco-kosher?

But, these same vegetables sold locally (by someone earning a living wage in a safe occupation) would be an example of near-perfect eco-kashrut! After all, eco-kashrut emphasizes “local, sustainable, organic and humane farming methods and focuses on the principles of good health, ethics, and finally, religious obligation.”¹ With so many aspects to weigh, surely such a “certification” could easily become either impossibly difficult to obtain, or meaningless.

¹Cooperman, Alan. "Eco-Kosher Movement Aims to Heed Tradition, Conscience." Washington Post 7 July 2007. 3 Mar. 2008 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>>.

Many seder meals begin with a roasted egg. The egg's simple, exquisite shape evokes the cycles of life as well as of the seasons. The egg connotes rebirth, and this makes it a perfect appetizer

for a spring holiday meal. Eggs, found at the grocer and available at farmer's markets, are high in protein and low in price, making them an exceptional value. However, there are huge differences in eggs, and the conscious consumer should educate herself regarding what different labels mean.

Conventional chicken agriculture is often called "battery farming," after the cages in which the chickens are kept. There are numerous humane issues regarding the battery farming of chickens. The hens live six per cage, with approximately 67 square inches of wire "floor space" apiece (less than the size of a piece of notebook paper), which is not enough for the animals to stretch their wings or nest. The chickens are never allowed out of the cages, until their egg-production slows and they are removed for slaughter. The birds also have their beaks "trimmed," a requirement which keeps the birds from injuring one another in stress-induced aggressive behaviors.

Cage free and free range eggs sound better than conventional battery farming, but the truth is that conditions are far from humane. Chickens are still far overcrowded, and though free range chickens technically "have access to the outdoors," true free range on an industrial level is a myth. Michael Pollan, in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, describes a "free range" chicken operation (not a farm, as we would recognize it). The chickens live in similar circumstances to conventionally-raised hens. For example, five (of the seven weeks of their lives), hundreds of the animals are confined to a long chicken shed. For the last two weeks before slaughter, a chicken-sized door in the wall of the shed is opened, which leads to a small lawn. The lawn is purely ornamental, as no chickens ever leave the building, where food and water is kept.

Organic eggs come from chickens that have been fed a vegetarian diet grown without commercial pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides. "Hormone free" is meaningless, as the FDA has not approved any hormones for poultry use. The word "natural" has no regulated meaning, nor does "no antibiotics," as USDA does not allow routine, or prophylactic, antibiotic use.

Vegetarian-fed eggs come from hens that have not received "conventional chicken feed, like feather meal, chicken litter, pork and cattle byproducts and "spent hen meal" (ground up dead hens)," although it also means the birds did not receive a natural diet, as the birds would typically eat insects and other non-vegetarian matter when allowed to roam freely.

The best way to ensure the eggs you eat are from humanely-treated birds is to buy them at the source, or from a local vendor who will allow you to visit the farm. If you can see and interact with the animals, the chickens are healthy and being treated appropriately. If the animals are kept by the thousands in foul-smelling aviaries, or are stuffed into tiny, stacked cages, it is both unethical and inhumane to purchase the product. After all, we Jews have a responsibility to minimize the suffering of animals. Can we say conventional eggs are misery-free?

Sources: *United Egg Producers*, *U.S. Department of Agriculture*, and, "Sorting Through the Claims of the Boastful Egg," by Catherine Price, in *The New York Times*, September 17, 2008.

Tzafun/Afikoman/Dessert - תפוח

[If someone of the children has "stolen" it, or if the adults have hidden the Afikoman when it is first put aside (IV) and let the children look for it during the meal to win a prize, it is now time to redeem the Afikoman. Then, each person eats a portion of the Afikoman.

After one eats the Afikoman, it is forbidden to eat anything further or to drink anything but for the two remaining mandatory ritual cups of wine, one for the Grace after meals and one for Hallel.

One accepted theory is that Afikoman is a Greek word connoting the dessert – dates, parched corn, nuts, sweet fruits, etc. The Seder meal in the time of the Temple was concluded with a taste of the Paschal lamb that had been offered in the Temple, after which nothing further was eaten.]

Barekh/Birkat HaMazone - בִּרְכָה

After we eat the festive meal, we all stay at the table to bentsch, or sing and pray the “grace after meals.” In the Birkat Hamazon, we thank G-d for nourishing the whole world and for providing food to all creatures. We even bless G-d, whose food we have eaten. This tradition, of thanking after receiving, may be one of the most important, and definitely one of the most applicable, to our practice of environmental ethics. Most of all, we must remember to be grateful for the gifts we have all received from the earth. This time at the Seder table is holy; we have all eaten, we are all full and happy, and it is easy to be thankful. We have already partaken in the gifts that were proffered, and we joyfully sing our gratitude. This time is symbolic of our time, the present. We have all shared in the offerings of the planet, what we call her “resources.” Now, it is time to show our appreciation by taking care of the planet the way she has taken care of our needs. The Bible is clear on who is the true owner of the earth. Humans, simply caretakers of the land, must keep the environment for its Creator.

The earth is the Creator’s and all that is in it,
the world and its inhabitants;
for G-d has founded it upon the ocean,
and established it on the rivers. (Psalm 24:1-2)

The blessings we repeat before eating, transfer ownership of the food from G-d to us.

Our Rabbis taught: It is forbidden to enjoy anything of this world without a *berakhah*, and whoever enjoys anything of this world without a *berakhah* commits sacrilege (*ma’al*). Rav Judah said in the name of Samuel: To enjoy things of this world without a *berakhah* is like making personal use of things consecrated to heaven. (*Berakhot* 35a, See also *Tosafot Berakhot* 4.1)

The Rabbis’ assumption that blessings are appropriate both in and out of the Land should be noted from the outset. They place no limitation on the location of the meal or the source of the produce to be consumed. The Torah prescribes gratitude to G-d as Sovereign of Israel; the Rabbis extend that response to the world:

It is written: “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1), [yet] “He has given the earth to human beings” (Psalm 115:16). There is no contradiction. The first verse reflects the situation before we say a blessing, whereas the second verse applies after the blessing has been said. (*Berakhot* 35a)

--from “Our Covenant with Stones: A Jewish Ecology of Earth,” by Bradley Shavit Artson, in *Judaism and Environmental Ethics: A Reader*, edited by Martin Yaffe.

The barech, repeated after the meal, expresses our gratitude to the Creator and to the Earth. One way of expressing our gratitude must be to allow rest, something humans have not provided the planet recently. We all require rest. When we attempt to do without, we find the “work” which was so important becomes sloppy and our products are of low quality. Now, the

earth requires her Shabbat. Though everyone may not be willing to grant it, we must. After repeating our thanks to G-d for G-d's food, we give thanks to the planet for what has been granted to us: clean water, fertile land, fresh air, healthy bodies, and pure foods to nourish us. Here are some contemporary prayers of thanks.

A Call to Prayer

We who have lost our sense and our senses – our touch, our smell, our vision of who we are; we who frantically force and press all things, without rest for body or spirit, hurting our earth and injuring ourselves: we call a halt.

We want to rest. We need to rest and allow the earth to rest. We need to reflect and to rediscover the mystery that lives in us, that is the ground of every unique expression of life, the source of the fascination that calls all things to communion.

We declare a Sabbath, a space of quiet: for simple being and letting be; for recovering the great, forgotten truths; for learning how to live again.

A Prayer of Awareness

Today we know of the energy that moves all things: the oneness of existence, the diversity and uniqueness of every moment of creation, every shape and form, the attraction, the allurements, the fascination that all things have for one another.

Humbled by our knowledge, chastened by surprising revelations, with awe and reverence we come before the mystery of life.

A Prayer of Sorrow

Reader: We have forgotten who we are.

We have forgotten who we are

We have alienated ourselves from the unfolding of the cosmos

We have become estranged from the movements of the earth

We have turned our backs on the cycles of life.

We have forgotten who we are.

We have sought only our own security

We have exploited simply for our own ends

We have distorted our knowledge

We have abused our power.

We have forgotten who we are.

Now the land is barren

And the waters are poisoned

And the air is polluted.

We have forgotten who we are.

Now the forests are dying

And the creatures are disappearing

And the humans are despairing.

We have forgotten who we are.

We ask forgiveness

We ask for the gift of remembering

We ask for the strength to change.

(Silence)

A Prayer of Healing

Reader: We join with the earth and with each other.

To bring new life to the land

To restore the waters

To refresh the air

We join with the earth and with each other.

To renew the forests To care for the plants

To protect the creatures

We join with the earth and with each other.

To celebrate the seas

To rejoice the sunlight

To sing the song of the stars

We join with the earth and with each other.

To recall our destiny

To renew our spirits

To reinvigorate our bodies

We join with the earth and with each other.

To create the human community

To promote justice and peace

To remember our children

Reader: We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving
mystery: for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.

A Prayer of Gratitude

Reader: We rejoice in all life.

We live in all things

All things live in us

We rejoice in all life.

We live by the sun

We move with the stars

We rejoice in all life.

We eat from the earth

We drink from the rain

We breathe from the air

We rejoice in all life.

We share with the creatures

We have strength through their gifts

We rejoice in all life.

We depend on the forests

We have knowledge through their secrets

We rejoice in all life.

We have the privilege of seeing and understanding

We have the responsibility of caring

We have the joy of celebrating.

Reader: We are full of the grace of creation

We are graceful

We are grateful

We rejoice in all life.

--From "Only One Earth," a United Nations Environment Programme publication for "Environmental Sabbath/Earth Rest Day," June 1990; UN Environment Programme, DC2-803 United Nations, New York, NY 10017.

Listen

with the night falling we are saying thank you
we are stopping on the bridges to bow from the railings
we are running out of the glass rooms
with our mouths full of food to look at the sky
and say thank you...
(—W.S. Merwin)

"Blessed is the merciful one, sovereign of all worlds, source of this bread."
(According to the Talmud, this is the briefest blessing one can make while still fulfilling the obligation to bless one's meal.)

Let us praise the Eternal, of Whose bounty we have partaken
and by Whose goodness we live.
On this Festival of Matzot, inspire us to goodness.
On this Festival of Freedom, make us a blessing.
On this Festival of Pesach, preserve us in life.
All-Merciful, You are our Source.
Sustain us with honorable work.
Make us worthy of the promise of a world that is yet to come.
May the One who blessed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah,
bless this home, this table, and all assembled here;
and may all our loved ones share our blessing.
May the One who brings harmony into the spheres on high
bring peace to earth for all humanity.

Our rabbis created different blessings for each kind of food. For delicacies, our rabbis said: "Blessed are You who created all kinds of delicacies for delight." For meats and eggs, they said: "Blessed are You who created life to give life." For bread: "Blessed are You, who brings out bread from the earth." While some rabbis taught that only the proper "formula" could be recited over specific foods, others took a more pragmatic view, saying, "If you were to see a loaf of bread and say, 'What a fine loaf this is! Blessed is the Holy One who created it!' you would have fulfilled your obligation to bless."
(Babylonian Talmud: Brakhot 40b)

Prayer After Eating

I have taken in the light
that quickened eye and leaf.
May my brain be bright with praise
of what I eat, in the brief blaze
of motion and of thought.
May I be worthy of my meat.

(—Wendell Berry)

Blessing of the Stew Pot

Blessed be the Creator
and all creative hands
which plant and harvest,
pack and haul and hand
over sustenance—
Blessed be carrot and cow,
potato and mushroom,
tomato and bean,
parsley and peas
onion and thyme,
garlic and bay leaf,
pepper and water,
marjoram and oil,
and blessed be fire—
and blessed be the enjoyment
of nose and eye,
and blessed be color—
and blessed be the Creator
for the miracle of red potato,
for the miracle of green bean,
for the miracle of fawn mushrooms
and blessed be G-d
for the miracle of earth:
ancestors, grass, bird,
deer and all gone,
wild creatures
whose bodies became
carrots, peas, and wild
flowers, who
give sustenance
to human hands, whose
agile dance of music
nourishes the ear
and soul of the dog
resting under the stove
and the woman working over
the stove and the geese
out the open window
strolling in the backyard.
And blessed be G-d
for all, all, all. 23
(—Alla Renee Bozarth)

V'achalta, v'savata, u'verachta/וּבְרַכְתָּ וּשְׁבַעְתָּ וְאָכַלְתָּ
(chorus: *v'achalta, v'savata, u'verachta*)

We ate when we were hungry, and now we're satisfied
 We thank the Source of Blessing, for all that S/He provides.
 Hunger is a yearning, in body and soul
 Earth, air, fire, water, and Spirit make us whole.
 Giving and receiving, we open up our hands
 From seed time to harvest, we're partners with the land.
 We share in a vision of wholeness and release
 Where every child is nourished, and we all live in peace (Amen!)
 (—Hannah Tiferet Siegel)

נודה לעין החיים
 הונה את הכל.

על הארץ הטובה והרחבה
 נשמר נא, והיא תקימנו.

ונבקש מזון להשביע בו
 כל יושבי תבל.

Nodeh l'eyn hachayim Hazanah et hakol.

*Al ha'aretz hatovah v'har'chavah Nishmor'na, v'hi t'kay'meynu,
 Unvakeysh mazon l'hasbi'a bo Kol yosh'vey teyveyl.*

Let us acknowledge the source of life, source of all nourishment.

May we protect the bountiful earth that it may continue to sustain us,
 and let us seek sustenance for all who dwell in the world.

--from *The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival* (Harper, 1996; Beacon, 1999), by Marcia Lee Falk.

“When a person observes G-d’s works and G-d’s great and marvelous creatures, and they see from them G-d’s wisdom that is without estimate or end, immediately they will love G-d, praise G-d and long with a great desire to know G-d’s Great Name...And when a person thinks about these things they draw back and are afraid and realizes that they are small, lowly and obscure, endowed with slight and slender intelligence, standing in the presence of G-d who is perfect in knowledge.” --*Mishneh Torah, Sepher Madah, Hilkhoh Yesodei Ha-Torah 2:1-2*

The Practice of Grateful Living as a Global Ethic

Grateful living is a universal ethic capable of ushering us peacefully into a new era in which we must share the world's resources fairly and conserve the environment for future generations. An ethic is "a set of moral principles or values" (Webster's New Collegiate). This is not a set of rules but rather the general principles and values with which we approach life and other people.

Our era is one in which both dangers and opportunities have become global in their impacts. Technology, capital, and employment now flow freely among nations in ways that devastate some while bringing prosperity to others. Moreover, the threats of war, terrorism, or environmental disaster originating in one place now have a global reach from which no nation is secure. The transition before us is perhaps the greatest challenge the people of the world have ever faced. Indeed, it is probably the first challenge that all of the world's people have needed to face together. For that reason, we need not only a new ethic for developed nations; we need a new ethic that can be shared by traditional cultures as well. This is because many traditional cultures regard the rapid changes brought by globalization as a vicious cultural conquest by the West and respond in anger.

Gratefulness – the simple response of our heart to this life in all its fullness – goes beyond boundaries of creed, age, vocation, gender, and nation. Br. David Steindl-Rast, co-founder of www.gratefulness.org, notes that “our approach to gratefulness has to be big enough to embrace all the difficulties of the world.”

Grateful living offers a universal ethic for our times because:

- The universal sentiment of gratefulness is shared by all cultures and religious traditions.
- Gratefulness lies at the mystical core of all religions, and can provide a point of agreement between people from different traditions that transcends the divisive dogmas of each religion or sect.
- In the same way, it provides a common language for dialogue between religious people and non-religious people, since both religious and non-religious people can deeply appreciate the value of gratitude.
- Gratitude teaches us to appreciate what we have, and so becomes the starting point for relieving the fear of scarcity that drives our unsustainable consumption patterns.
- One cannot be grateful and hold on for long to the attitude of being a victim. This greatly diminishes the anger that can lead to war.
- Gratitude teaches us to appreciate all that comes to us gratuitously, which includes the non-human natural world with its countless plants, animals, and minerals. Thus, gratitude is a green attitude.
- Gratitude causes us to regard other peoples and cultures as blessings and not as threats to our way of life.
- Gratitude offers a spirit of generosity and trust to replace the suspicion and resentment that stands in the way of achieving a peaceful transition to a more just sharing of the world's bounty.

--By Chris Wilson, a member of the Board of Directors for *A Network for Grateful Living*

A Contemporary Birkat Hamazon

You are the source of everything,
It is because of you we sing,
You nourish the world with goodness and sustain it with grace,
We find you in the dust and in the vastness of space,
We taste you in the food we eat and see you in our friends

You strengthen our rejoicing with a love that never ends.

You are the source of everything,
It is because of you we sing,
We thank you for the rain that falls upon the fertile ground,
And for all the plants and animals that in your world abound,
We fill our cups to overflow from the River of your Love,
We dig our roots into your soul and grow our leaves above.

You are the source of everything,
It is because of you we sing,
You fill our eyes with visions of a heaven here on earth,
Inspiring us to meet the challenge of our own rebirth,
We won't sit around and wait for Mashiah-time to start,
Your compassion builds Jerusalem in Israel and in our hearts.

You are the source of everything,
It is because of you we sing,
And even when it seems we've reached the end of our rope,
Your presence in our hearts reminds us not to lose all hope,
The knowledge of your goodness brings a light into our home,
Your presence gives us faith to wander into the unknown.

Bless this place and all things who have shared our meal,
May the food we eat strengthen the love we feel,
Bless the One who blesses us with peace,
May our will to do your work increase,
Bless the child who searches for you in vain,
May the suffering ones find respite from their pain,
Bless our friends who have so much to bear,
May the homeless folk find shelter in your care.

--by Rabbi Shefa Gold, in *Kol Haneshamah: Songs and Grace After Meals*; p. 32-33, 2003.

Nature is G-d's niggun, a wordless melody of unfolding Life.
To awaken to G-d we must hear the niggun.
To awaken to G-d we must listen in deep silence.
Silence arises when thinking ceases.
If we would know G-d we must quiet the mind, cease the chatter that passes for knowledge when in fact it only flatters the foolish.
We cannot live without words but let us no imagine that words are sufficient.
As a symphony needs rest to lift music out of noise, So we need silence to lift Truth out of words.
"Nature is G-d's niggun," *Pesukei Dezimrah/Verses Of Praise: Interpretive Versions*, by Rami Shapiro

Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of G-d,

the sky proclaims G-d's handiwork.
Day to day makes utterance,
night to night speaks out.
There is no utterance,
there are no words,
whose sound goes unheard.
Their voice carries throughout the earth,
their words to the end of the world.
G-d placed in them a tent for the sun,
who is like a groom coming forth from the chamber,
like a hero, eager to run his course.
G-d's rising-place is at one end of heaven,
and G-d's circuit reaches the other;
nothing escapes G-d's heat.

The teaching of the Creator is perfect;
renewing life;
the decrees of the Creator are enduring,
making the simple wise;
The precepts of the Creator are just,
rejoicing the heart;
the instruction of the Creator is lucid,
making the eyes light up.
The fear of the Creator is pure,
abiding forever,
the judgements of the Creator are true,
righteous altogether,
more desirable than gold;
sweeter than honey,
than drippings of the comb.
Your servant pays them heed;
in obeying them there is much reward.
Who can be aware of errors?
Clear me of unperceived guilt,
and from willful sins keep your servant;
let them not dominate me;
then shall I be blameless
and clear of grave offense.
May the words of my mouth
and the prayer of my heart
be acceptable to You,
O Creator, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalm 136

Praise the Creator, for the Creator is good,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal.
Praise the G-d of G-ds,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal.

Praise the Lord of lords,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who alone workds great marvels,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who made the heavens with wisdom,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who spread the earth over the water,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who made the great lights,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
the sun to dominate the day,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
the moon and the stars to dominate the night,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who struck Egypt through their first-born,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
and brought Israel out of their midst,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who split apart the Sea of Reeds,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
and made Israel pass through it,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who hurled Pharaoh and his army into the Sea of Reeds,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who led G-d's people through the wilderness,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who struck down great kings,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
and slew mighty kings—
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Shihon, king of the Amorites,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Og, king of Bashan—
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
and gave their land as a heritage,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
a heritage to G-d's servant Israel,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who took note of us in our degradation,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
and rescued us from our enemies,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Who gives food to all flesh,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
Praise the G-d of heaven,
G-d's steadfast love is eternal.

Psalm 92

It is good to praise the Creator,
to sing hymns to Your name, O Most High,
To proclaim Your steadfast love at daybreak,
Your faithfulness each night
With a ten-stringed harp,
with voice and lyre together.
You have gladdened me by Your deeds, O G-d;
I shout for joy at Your handiwork.
How great are Your words, O G-d,
how very subtle Your designs!
A brutish person cannot know,
a fool cannot understand this:
though the wicked sprout like grass,
though all evildoers blossom,
it is only that they may be destroyed forever.

But You are exalted, O G-d, for all time.

Surely, Your enemies, O G-d,
surely Your enemies perish;
all evildoers are scattered.
You raise my horn high like that of a wild ox;
I am soaked in freshening oil.
I shall see the defeat of my watchful foes,
hear of the downfall of the wicked who beset me.
The righteous bloom like a date-palm;
they thrive like a cedar in Lebanon;
planted in the house of the Creator,
they flourish in the courts of our G-d.
In old age they still produce fruit;
they are full of sap and freshness,
attesting that the Creator is upright,
my rock, in whom there is no wrong.

Psalm 121

I turn my eyes to the mountains;
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Creator,
maker of heaven and earth.
G-d will not let your foot give way;
your guardian will not slumber;
See the guardian of Israel
neither slumbers nor sleeps!
The Creator is your guardian,
the Creator is your protection
at your right hand.

By day the sun will not strike you,
nor the moon by night.
The Creator will guard you from all harm;
G-d will guard your life.
The Creator will guard your going and coming
now and forever.

Psalm 146

Hallelujah.
Praise the Creator, O my soul!
I will praise the Creator all my life,
sing hymns to my G-d while I exist.

Put not your trust in the great,
in mortals who cannot save.
The breath departs;
we return to the dust;
on that day our plans come to nothing.

Happy is the one who has the Creator for help,
whose hope is in the Creator,
maker of heaven and earth,
the sea and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
who secures justice for those who are wronged,
gives food to the hungry.
The Creator sets prisoners free;
The Creator restores sight to the blind;
the Creator makes those who are bent stand straight;
the Creator loves the righteous;
the Creator watches over the stranger;
G-d gives courage to the orphan and widow,
but makes the path of the wicked tortuous.

The Creator shall reign forever,
your G-d, O Zion, for all generations.
Hallelujah.

Psalm 148

Hallelujah.
Praise the Creator from the heavens;
praise G-d on high.
Praise G-d, all G-d's angels,
praise G-d, all G-d's hosts.
Praise G-d, sun and moon,
Praise G-d, all bright stars.
Praise G-d, highest heavens,
and you waters that are above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of G-d,
 for it was G-d who commanded that they be created.
 G-d made them endure forever,
 establishing an order that shall never change.
 Praise G-d, O you who are on earth,
 all sea monsters and ocean depths,
 fire and hail, snow and smoke,
 storm wind that executes G-d's command,
 all mountains and hills,
 all fruit trees and cedars,
 all wild and tamed beasts,
 creeping things and winged birds,
 all kings and peoples of the earth,
 all princes of the earth and its judges,
 youths and maidens alike,
 old and young together.
 Let them praise the name of the Creator,
 for G-d's name, G-d's alone, is sublime;
 G-d's splendor covers heaven and earth.
 G-d has exalted the horn of G-d's people
 for the glory of all G-d's faithful ones,
 Israel, the people close to G-d.
 Hallelujah.

Psalm 150

Hallelujah.
 Praise G-d in G-d's sanctuary;
 praise G-d in the sky, G-d's stronghold.
 Praise G-d for G-d's mighty acts;
 praise G-d for G-d's exceeding greatness.
 Praise G-d with blasts of the horn;
 praise G-d with harp and lyre.
 Praise G-d with timbrel and dance;
 praise G-d with lute and pipe.
 Praise G-d with resounding cymbals;
 praise G-d with loud-clashing cymbals.
 Let all that breathes praise the Creator.
 Hallelujah.

בִּרְךְ - Barekh/Birkat HaMazone

Psalm 126

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הִי יְנוּ פִּי הַלְמִים: אֲזַיִם לֹא שָׁחֹק פִּי יְנוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵי נֹרַת הָאֵז יֹאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם
 הִגְדִּיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי הַגֹּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם נֹרַת הָאֵז יְנוּ שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הִי יְנוּ שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הִי יְנוּ שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הִי יְנוּ
 הַיְיָ רַעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרַגְלֵי הַקָּצָרִים: הַלְלוּךְ יְיָ וּבְכַל הַיְיָ מִשְׁנֵי הַיְיָ רַעִים בְּרַגְלֵי הַקָּצָרִים: הַלְלוּךְ יְיָ וּבְכַל הַיְיָ מִשְׁנֵי הַיְיָ רַעִים בְּרַגְלֵי הַקָּצָרִים:
*Shir ha-ma'alot b'shuv Adonai et sheevat Tziyon hayinu keh_ulmim. Az y'malel sehok pinu
 ul'shonenu rina. As yomru vagoyim higidil Adonai la-asot im eileh, higidil Adonai la-asot imanu*

hayinu semeihim. Shuva Adonai et sheviteinu ka-afikim baNegev. Hazorim bedimah berinah yiktzoru. Halokh yelekh uvakho, nosei mesekh hazarah, bo yavo v'rinah nosei alumatah.

When the Creator restores the fortunes of Zion
—we see it as in a dream—
our mouths shall be filled with laughter,
our tongues, with songs of joy.
Then shall they say among the nations,
“The Creator has done great things for them!”
The Creator will do great things for us
and we shall rejoice.

Restore our fortunes, O G-d,
like watercourses in the Negeb.
They who sow in tears
shall reap with songs of joy.
Though he goes along weeping,
carrying the seed-bag,
he shall come back with songs of joy,
carrying his sheaves.

המזמן: רבותי נברך

Leader: *Rabotai n'varekh.*
Friends, let us say grace.

המסובין: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם.

Everyone: *Y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorakh mei-ata v'ad olam.*
Blessed be the name of G-d now and forever.

המזמן: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם.

Leader: (repeats) *Y'hi sheim Adonai m'vorakh mei-ata v'ad olam.*
Blessed be the name of G-d now and forever.

המזמן: ברשות מרגנו ורבנו ורבותי, נברך (אלהינו) ש אכ לנו משלו.

Leader: *Birshut maran v'raban v'rabotai n'vareikh (Eloheinu) she-akhalnu mee-shelo.*
With your permission, let us now bless (our) G-d whose food we have eaten.

המסובין: ברוך (אלהינו) ש אכ לנו משלו ובטובו חיינו.

Everyone: *Barukh (Eloheinu) she-akhalnu mee-shelo uv'tuvo hayeenu.*
Blessed be (our G-d) whose food we have eaten and through whose goodness we live.

המזמן: ברוך (אלהינו) ש אכ לנו משלו ובטובו חיינו.

Leader: (repeats) *Barukh (Eloheinu) she-akhalnu mee-shelo uv'tuvo hayeenu.*
Blessed be (our G-d) whose food we have eaten and through whose goodness we live.

המסובין: בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שֵׁמוֹ:

Everyone: *Barukh hu uvarukh sh'mo.*
Blessed be G-d and blessed be G-d's name.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַזֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּיָדְךָ בְּהַסְרָתְךָ וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא נוֹתֵן לְכָל בְּשָׂרַיִךְ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגְּדוֹל תִּמְיֵד לְאֵלֵינוּ חֲסִדְךָ לְנוּ, וְאַל יִחְסַר לְנוּ מִזֶּן לְעוֹלָם נֶעֱד. בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגְּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זֶן וּמְפָרֵס לְכָל וּמְטִיב לְכָל, וּמְכִין מִזֶּן לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בְּרָא. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַזֵּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh haolam, hazal et haolam kulo b'tuvo b'hein b'hesed uv'rahmamim, hu notein lehem l'khol vasar kee l'olam hasdo. uv'tuvo hagadol, tamid lo hasar lanu, v'al yehsar lanu mazol l'olam vaed. Ba'avur sh'mo hagadol, kee hu eilzanum'farnei lakol umei-tiv lakol, umeikhin mazon k'khol b'riyotav asher bara, Barukh atah Adonai, hazan et hakol.
Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who nourishes the whole world with grace, kindness and mercy. You provide food to all creatures, for your kindness endures forever. Through this great goodness we have never been in want; may we never be in want of sustenance. G-d sustains us all, doing good to all, and providing food for all creation. Praised are you, G-d, who sustains all.

נוֹדָה לְךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שֶׁהִנַּח לְתֶךָ לְאַבּוֹתֵינוּ, אֶרֶץ חֲמִדָּה טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה, וְעַל שֶׁהוֹצֵאתָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וּפְדִיתָנוּ, מִבַּיִת עֲבָדִים, וְעַל בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁחָתַמְתָּנוּ בְּבִשְׂרָנוּ, וְעַל תּוֹרַתְךָ שֶׁלַּמְּדַתָּנוּ, וְעַל חֻקֶּיךָ, יְיָ שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּנוּ, נוּ וְעַל חַיִּים חַן וְחֶסֶד שֶׁחֻנַּנְתָּנוּ, נוּ, וְעַל אֲכִילַת מִזֶּן שֶׁאַתָּה זֶן וּמְפָרֵס אוֹתָנוּ, נוּ תִּמְיֵד, בְּכָל יוֹם וּבְכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה:

Nodeh l'kha Adonai Eloheinu al she-hinhalta la-avoteinu, eretz hemedah tovah u-r'havah, v'al she-hotzetanu Adonai Eloheinu me-eretz Mitzrayim, u-f'ditanu mi-beit avadim, v'al b'rit'kha she-hatamta bi-v'sarenu, v'al Torat'kha she-limadtanu, v'al hukhekha she-hoda-tanu, v'al hayim hen va-hesed she-honantanu, v'al akhilat mazon she-atah zan u-m'farnes otanu tamid, b'khol yom u-v'khol et u-v'khol sha-ah.

We thank you, G-d, for having given a beautiful, good, and spacious land to our ancestors as a heritage; for having taken us out from the land of Egypt and redeemed us from the house of slavery; your covenant which you sealed in our flesh; for your Torah which you taught us; for your laws which you have given to us; for the life, grace and kindness you have granted us; and for the food with which you always sustain us.

וְעַל הַכֹּל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִנּוּ אֲנִי חֲנוּ מוֹדִים לְךָ, וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ, יְתַבְרַךְ שֵׁמְךָ בְּפִי כֹל חַי תִּמְיֵד לְעוֹלָם נֶעֱד. כִּי פִּתּוּב, וְאַכְלִיתָנוּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּנוּ, וּבְרַכְתָּנוּ אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל הָאֶרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּנוּ לָנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, עַל הָאֶרֶץ וְעַל הַמִּזֶּן:

V'al ha-kol Adonai Eloheinu, anahnu modim lakh u-m'varkhim otakh, yitbarakh shim'kha b'fi khol hai tamid l'olam va-ed. Ka-katuv v'akhalta v'sava-ta, u-verakhta et Adonai Elohekha al ha-arets ha-tovah asher natan lakh. Barukh atah Adonai, al ha-arets v'al ha-mazon.

For everything, G-d, we thank and praise you. May your name be blessed by all forever, as it is written: "After you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless G-d, for the good land G-d has given you." Praised are you, G-d, for the land and the food.

[לשבת רציה והקליצ, נו יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִנּוּ אֲנִי בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וּבְמִצְוֹת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת בְּיַד הַשֵּׁבִיעִי הַשֵּׁבִיעִי הַגְּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ הַגְּדוֹל. כִּי יוֹם זֶה גְּדוֹל וְקְדוֹשׁ הוּא לְפָנֶיךָ, לְשַׁבָּת בּוֹ וְלִגְדוֹת בּוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה כִּי מִצְוֹת רְצוֹנָיִךָ וּבְרִצְוֹנָיִךָ יָחַד לְנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שֶׁלֹּא תִהְיֶה צָרָה וְיִגְדוֹן וְאַנְחָה בְּיוֹם מְנוּחָתְנוּ. נוּ, וְהִרְאָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּנִחְמַת צִיּוֹן עֵירֵךְ, נוּ, וּבְבִנְיַן יְרוּשָׁה לְיָם עֵיר קְדֻשָׁתְךָ, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא בְּעַל הַיְשׁוּעוֹת וּבְעַל הַנְּקָמוֹת:]

[On Shabbat add: *R'tzei v'ha-halitzenu Adonai Eloheinu b'mitzvotekha, u-v'mitzvat yom ha-sh'vi-i, ha-Shabbat ha-gadol v'ha-kadosh ha-zeh. Ki yom zeh gadol v'kadosh hu l'fanekha, lishbot bo*

v'lanu-ah bo, b'ahavah k'mitzvat r'tzonekha, u-virtzon'kha hanaḥ lanu, Adonai Eloheinu, she-lo t'hi tzarah v'yagon va-anahah b'yom m'nuhatenu. V'har-enu Adonai Eloheinu b'nehamat Tziyon irekha, u-v'vinyan Y'rushalayim ir kodshekha, ki atah hu ba-al ha-y'shu-ot u-va-al ha-nehamot.]

[On Shabbat add: Favor us and strengthen us, G-d, with your commandments-with the commandment concerning the seventh day, this great and holy Sabbath. This day is great and holy before you to abstain from work and rest on it in love according to your will. In your will, G-d, grant us rest so that there be nor sorrow and grief on our day of rest. Let us, G-d, live to see Zion your city comforted, Jerusalem your holy city rebuilt, for you are Creator of all salvation and consolation.]

[לפסח אֵלֶּה יְנוּ וְאֵלֶּהי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יַעֲלֶה נִיבֵּא וְיִגְ, יַע, וְיִרְאֶה, וְיִרְצֶה, וְיִשְׁמַע, וְיִפְקֹד, וְיִזְכֹּר זְכוֹרֵינוּ, וְיִפְקֹדֵנוּ, וְיִזְכְּרוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְיִזְכְּרוּ מִשְׁ, יֵח בּוֹ דָּוִד עֶבְדְּךָ, וְיִזְכְּרוּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, יָם עִיר קִדְשְׁךָ, וְיִזְכְּרוּ כָּל עַמְּךָ בְּיַת יֵשׁוּעָה לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפָלִיטָה לְטוֹבָה לְחַן וְלֶחֶם סֶד וְלִרְחֻמִּים, לְחַיִּים וְלִשְׁלוֹם בְּיוֹם חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. זְכֹר, נוּ יְיָ אֵלֶּה יְנוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה. וְיִפְקֹד, נוּ בּוֹ לְבָרְכָה. וְהוֹשִׁיעַ, נוּ בּוֹ לְחַיִּים, וְיִבְדְּבַר יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים, חוּס וְחַנּוּן, נוּ, וְרַחֲמִים עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעַ, נוּ, כִּי אֵלֶּיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה:]

[For Passover Eloheinu veilohei avoteinu, yaleh v'yavo v'yagiah, v'yei-ra-eh, v'yei-ratzeh, v'yishma, v'yipakeid, v'yizakheir zikhronenu ufik-doneinu, v'zikhron avoteinu, v'zikhron mashiah be david avdekha, v'zikhron y'rushalayim ir kod-shekha, v'zikhron kol amkha beit yisrael l'fanekha, lifleita l'tova l'hein ul'hesed ul'rahmamim, l'hayim ul'shalom b'yom hag ha-matzot hazeh. zokhreinu Adonai Eloheinu bo l'tova, ufokdeinu vo livrakha v'hoshi-einu vo l'hayim, uv'd-var y'shu-ah v'rahmamim, hus v'ha-neinu, v'raheim aleinu v'hoshi-einu ki ei-lekha eineinu, ki eil melekh hanun vrahum ata.

[For Passover Our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, may the remembrance of us, of our ancestors, of the anointed son of David your servant, of Jerusalem your holy city, and of all your people the house of Israel, ascend, come, appear, be heard, and be accepted before you for deliverance and good, for grace, kindness and mercy, for life and peace, on this day of the Festival of Matzot.

Remember us this day, G-d, for goodness; consider us for blessing; save us for life. With a word of salvation and mercy spare us and favor us; have pity on us and save us, for we look to you, for you are a gracious and merciful G-d and Creator.]

*וְבָנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, יָם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּיָמֵינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, בּוֹנֵה בְּרַחֲמֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. אָמֵן
U-v'nei Y'rushalayim ir ha-kodesh bi-m'herah v'yameinu. Barukh atah Adonai, boneh v'rahmamim Y'rushalayim. Amen.*

Rebuild Jerusalem the holy city speedily in our days. Praised are you, G-d, who will rebuild Jerusalem in mercy. Amen.

בְּמָרוֹם יְלַמְּדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעָלֵינוּ יְנוּ זְכוֹת, שְׁתֵּי הָאֵלֵּי לְמִשְׁכַּן רַחֲמֵיךָ, וְנִשְׂאָ בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ מֵאֵת יְיָ וְצִדְקָה מֵאֵלֶּיךָ יֵשׁוּעַ, נוּ, וְנִמְצָא חַן וְשֵׁן, כָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֵלֶּהי יָם וְאֵדָם:

Ba-marom y'lamdu aleihem v'aleinu z'khot, she-t'hi l'mishmeret shalom, v'nisa v'rakhah me-et Adonai, u-tz'dakah me-Elohei yish-enu, v'nimtza hen v'sekhel tov b'einei Elohim v'adam.

May heaven find merit in us that we may enjoy a lasting peace and receive blessings from the Creator, justice from G-d, and may we find favor and good sense in the eyes of G-d and all beings.

[לְשִׁבַת הַרְחֻמֵנוּ, הוּא יִנְחֵיל, נוּ יוֹם שְׁכֻלֵנוּ בְּיָת וּמְנוּחָה לְחַיִּים.]

Kos Sh'lishee - כוס שלישיית
Third Cup

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּזֶן, פִּן:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine.

Kos Eliyahu, Kos Miryam - כוס אליהו -

A Miriam's Cup is a new ritual object that is placed on the seder table beside the Cup of Elijah. Miriam's Cup is filled with water. It serves as a symbol of Miriam's Well, which was the source of water for the Israelites in the desert. Putting a Miriam's Cup on your table is a way of making your seder more inclusive. It lets people know that at your table, the words of girls and boys, women and men, are welcome. It is also a way of drawing attention to the importance of Miriam and the other women of the Exodus story - women who have sometimes been overlooked but about whom our tradition says, "If it wasn't for the righteousness of women of that generation we would not have been redeemed from Egypt" (Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 9b).

There are many legends about Miriam's Well. It is said to have been a magical source of water that followed the Israelites for forty years because of the merit of Miriam. The waters of this well were said to be healing and sustaining. Thus Miriam's Cup is a symbol of all that sustains us through our own journeys, while Elijah's Cup is a symbol of a future Messianic time.

Zot Kos Miryam, kos mayim chayim. Zeicher l'tzi-at Mitztrayim.

This is the Cup of Miriam, the cup of living waters. Let us remember the Exodus from Egypt. These are the living waters, G-d's gift to Miriam, which gave new life to Israel as we struggled with ourselves in the wilderness.

Blessed are You G-d, Who brings us from the narrows into the wilderness, sustains us with endless possibilities, and enables us to reach a new place.

"Miriam's Cup blessing" Copyright 1996 (Matia Rania Angelou, Janet Berkenfield, Stephanie Loo). Kol Ishah, PO Box 132, Wayland, MA, 01778

The Legend of Miriam's Well

At twilight on the second day of Creation, G-d embedded a precious liquid jewel in the earth, a miraculous well of pure, sparkling water. From one generation to the next, the well belonged to those who knew how to draw up its water. Filled with mayim chayim, living waters, the well was a reminder to all who drank or drew from it, that the Torah, the way of the Jewish people, is also a well from which all may drink and be restored 5

Possession of the well passed from Abraham, the first patriarch 6 to his concubine, Hagar 7 , and then to his son, Isaac. 8 Each of the patriarchs and matriarchs in turn discovered anew this source of living water in the desert. 9

During their Egyptian slavery, the Children of Israel lost access to the well itself. Worse, they lost the memory that such waters had ever existed.

Only by the merit of Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron, did the well reappear to them during their desert wanderings. But why was the well revealed in the name of Miriam?

The power of her voice and her intimate understanding of water were the reasons she was thought worthy to be the keeper of the well.

She convinced her father, Amram, to restore conjugal relations with her mother, Yocheved, because in a dream she learned that a liberator of Israel would be conceived from their union. 10 Later she sang to the Nile River, persuading it to protect her baby brother, Moses. She had placed him in the reeds close to the banks to save him from Pharaoh's evil decree that all Jewish baby boys should be destroyed at birth.

As a midwife in Egypt, she had also used her voice in her work. Known by the name Puah, which means "breath", she used to puff gentle sounds and songs into the ears of a woman about to give birth. With a voice calming as the rippling of water, Miriam coaxed reluctant newborns out of the womb and into the world. 11

After the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, Miriam and the women took up instruments as they danced and sang the song of redemption. 12 Once again, Miriam's reverence for water inspired her to lead a joyful song of salvation. Thus was Miriam's unique connection with the sources of redemption begun both in Egypt and the desert exile of her people. 13 It was believed then that G-d gave the well in Miriam's name, since Moses could barely speak, let alone sing, while the voice of Aaron, the priest, was so loud it frightened both children and animals.

Later, when Miriam passed from the earth, the well ran dry and disappeared just as in Egypt. In despair, the people complained loudly to their leader, Moses, that they would die of thirst. But Moses was unable to sing the waters of Creation up from the depths as his sister had. It was then that G-d told Moses and the people of Israel how to address the well and urge it to bring up the waters of life.

"Then Israel sang this song,
Spring up, O well, sing to it."14

Slowly they were answered with the well's nurturing waters. Accompanying them to Mt. Sinai where they received the Torah, Miriam's Well remained with

them. Its waters caused herbs to grow which the women used as perfume. Soft billowy grass sprouted from its waters which some used to make a bed for the night. But later, when they entered the Promised Land, Miriam's Well disappeared. It was thought that it had vanished because they were in their homeland once again and it was natural to drink from other wells. But some missed Miriam's Well and never stopped their search for it. They were the students of Torah who sought its sustenance in the wisdom of the sacred text.

Centuries later, in the village of Safed in the north of Israel lived the kabbalists – Jewish sages studying the mystical meanings in the Torah. They rediscovered Miriam's Well, claiming that it was found not far from them near the Sea of Galilee. One drink from its pure waters was said to alert the heart, mind, and soul and make the meanings of the Torah become clearer.

It was then that water from that well was taken in pouches to wherever Jews had settled. In each generation, it was believed, there lived wise men and women who would sprinkle these waters on the ground and cause new wells to spring forth. Centuries later, the hasidim of Eastern Europe attested to its ability to reappear, wherever Jews sang to it. 15

In our own time it is said that Miriam's Well is near those who cast their buckets into any well at the end of the Sabbath as all wells are filled with those refreshing waters at that time. 16 In this way the well now belongs to us Jewish women as we draw up from the depths of tradition the essentials of our sustenance.

In the manner of Miriam's Well, after crossing the Sea of Reeds, we have taken up our instruments and begun to sing our songs, to utter the words and tell the stories arising from our longings for the waters of her well. Our spiritual thirst has caused us to search our heritage and the Torah for ways to drink the clear waters of creation.

5. cf. Song of Songs Rabbah 1:2.

6. Gen. 21:24-25.

7. Gen. 21:19.

8. Gen. 26:18-23.

9. Genesis Rabbah 54:5, 60:5.

10. Ginzberg, Louis. Legends of the Jews , Vol. 2:262-265.

11. Ginzberg, vol. 2:262-265.

12. Ex. 15:20-21.

Cohen, Norman. "Miriam's Song: A Modern Midrashic Reading," Judaism , Spring 1984.

--from Adelman, Penina. Miriam's Well: Rituals for Jewish Women Around the Year (Biblio Press, 1986), p. 66-72.

Eliyahu hanavi. Eliyahu Hatishbi.

Eliyahu, Eliyahu.

Eliyahu hagiladi.

Bimheyrah b'yameynu. Yavo Eleynu.

Im mashiach ben david.
Im mashiach ben david.

Miriam Haneviah. Oz v'zimrah beyadah.
Miriam tirkod itanu, lehagdil zimrat olam.
Miriam tirkod itanu, l'taken et haolam.
Bimheyrah v'yameynu, hi t'vi-eynu.
El mey hayeshua,
El may hayeshua.

G-d has taught all beings to love their neighbors as themselves. Yet, in almost every age, some have not obeyed G-d's command. Our people have suffered frequently at the hands of such humans. In G-d's own way and in G-d's own time, the wicked pay the price of their wickedness. For G-d is a G-d of justice. As we open our doors and our hearts to Elijah, we pray that there soon will be an end to all evil deeds in the world. G-d has shown us the paths to peace. Amen.

Miriam the Prophetess is always associated with water in the Torah. When she dies, the Earth of the wanderers expresses their grief; the water which followed Miriam dries up. Many Miriam's Well rituals recommend filling her cup with "spring water," which brings to mind pictures of pure waterfalls and blue glaciers, natural images that many of us are happy to associate with a goddess of water. However, the bottled water most of us would use as "spring water," should have more negative connotations. Of course, there are the issues with plastic bottles (recyclable or not). There are concerns about plastic safety, parabens, and waste. More frightening even than the thought of billions of plastic water bottles in our landfills, though, is that of the corporate control of water. Though the tap water in the US is overwhelmingly safe, corporations have sold consumers the myth of bottled water as safer, purer, and better tasting than that which comes from their faucet at a fraction of the cost.

Many of the...companies are not only water intensive, but water abusive. Coca-Cola, for example, uses over 300 billion liters of water annually - a gigantic amount by any measure. But the real abuse lies in the fact that they convert two-thirds of the freshwater they use into wastewater, globally. In India, where Coca-Cola is the target of formidable community-led campaigns for creating water shortages and polluting groundwater and soil, the corporation has located many of its bottling plants in drought prone areas - and destroyed the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands.

For its part, Nestlé Waters' has placed a full ten percent of its factories in extremely water-stressed areas. Along with Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and others, Nestle has pursued an aggressive and misleading campaign to market bottled water, which, more often than not, comes straight from the public faucet. While most of Nestlé's bottled water brands come from groundwater sources, not all do. The company has aggressively promoted its PureLife brand, which comes mostly from purified municipal water sources. Of Nestlé Waters' \$3.57 billion in U.S. sales in 2006, the PureLife brand accounted for \$1.17 billion. Marked up a thousand times its cost at the tap, bottled water is a true consumer rip-off. Add to this the environmental cost of plastics used in the bottled water industry (more than 1.5 million tons), and the climate costs of trucking the bottles

everywhere, and you have the picture of an industry whose environmental footprint is disturbingly excessive and altogether unnecessary.

“Challenging Corporate Control of Water: Asserting Access to Water as a Fundamental Human Right” indiaresource.org, accessed January 16, 2009. November 17, 2008, Blue Planet Project/Council of Canadians, Food and Water Watch, India Resource Center and Indigenous Environmental Network

Before Egypt, and during our wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites were a nomadic people. Water is precious, in the Middle Eastern part of the world especially, but even moreso for those traveling from well to well through the desert and wilderness. Even today, the “water issue” is a hot topic in Israel, and all over the world.

In the New York Times, August 9, 2008, Andrew Martin wrote:

Israel is running short of water. A growing population and rising incomes have increased demand for fresh water, while a four-year drought has created what Shalom Simhon, the agriculture minister, calls “a deep water crisis.”

The problem isn’t only in Israel. Many arid regions of the globe, including the American West, are dealing with growing populations and shrinking water supplies. Global warming could make matters even worse.

In a speech earlier this year, the secretary general of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, said the shortage of water could lead to violence.

“Our experiences tell us that environmental stress, due to lack of water, may lead to conflict and would be greater in poor nations,” he said. “Population growth will make the problem worse. So will climate change. As the global economy grows, so will its thirst. Many more conflicts lie just over the horizon.”

Worldwide, the problem is even more serious. Water.org has a rundown of the basic issues:

- * 3.575 million people die each year from water-related disease. (11)
- * 43% of water-related deaths are due to diarrhea. (11)
- * 84% of water-related deaths are in children ages 0 – 14. (11)
- * 98% of water-related deaths occur in the developing world. (11)
- * 884 million people, lack access to safe water supplies, approximately one in eight people. (5)
- * The water and sanitation crisis claims more lives through disease than any war claims through guns. (1)
- * At any given time, half of the world’s hospital beds are occupied by patients suffering from a water-related disease. (1)
- * Less than 1% of the world’s fresh water (or about 0.007% of all water on earth) is readily accessible for direct human use. (12)
- * An American taking a five-minute shower uses more water than the typical person living in a developing country slum uses in a whole day. (1)
- * About a third of people without access to an improved water source live on less than \$1 a day. More than two thirds of people without an improved water source live on less than \$2 a day. (1)
- * Poor people living in the slums often pay 5-10 times more per liter of water than wealthy people living in the same city. (1)
- * Without food a person can live for weeks, but without water you can expect to live only a few days. (4)

* The daily requirement for sanitation, bathing, and cooking needs, as well as for assuring survival, is about 13.2 gallons per person. (3)

* Over 50 percent of all water projects fail and less than five percent of projects are visited, and far less than one percent has any longer-term monitoring. (10)

1. 2006 United Nations Human Development Report.
2. Number estimated from statistics in the 2006 United Nations Human Development Report.
3. Asian Development Bank web site. 2009.
4. The Discovery Channel web site. 2009.
5. UNICEF/WHO. 2008. Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: Special Focus on Sanitation.
6. UN. 2007. International Year of Sanitation Global Launch
7. UN Water. 2008. Gender, Water and Sanitation: A Policy Brief.
8. UN Water. 2008. Tackling a Global Crisis: International Year of Sanitation 2008
9. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC). 2008. A Guide to Investigating One of the Biggest Scandals of the Last 50 Years.
10. Rajesh Shah of Blue Planet Run Foundation.
http://www.bhopal.net/dowunioncarbide/archives/2006/07/worldwide_race.html
11. World Health Organization. 2008. Safer Water, Better Health: Costs, benefits, and sustainability of interventions to protect and promote health.
12. World Health Organization Fact Sheet Health in Water Resources Development.

How is the water crisis related to the environmental crisis? According to the article, "Population growth, climate change sparking water crisis: UN" published March 11, 2009 by the AFP Surging population growth, climate change, reckless irrigation and chronic waste are placing the world's water supplies at threat, according to a landmark UN report.

Compiled by 24 UN agencies, the 348-page document gave a grim assessment of the state of the planet's freshwater, especially in developing countries, and described the outlook for coming generations as deeply worrying.

Water is part of the complex web of factors that determine prosperity and stability, it said.

Lack of access to water helps drive poverty and deprivation and breeds the potential for unrest and conflict, it warned.

"Water is linked to the crises of climate change, energy and food supplies and prices, and troubled financial markets," the third World Water Development Report said.

"Unless their links with water are addressed and water crises around the world are resolved, these other crises may intensify and local water crises may worsen, converging into a global water crisis and leading to political insecurity at various levels."

The report pointed to a double squeeze on fresh water.

On one side was human impact. There were six billion humans in 2000, a tally that has already risen to 6.5 billion and could scale nine billion by 2050.

Population growth, especially in cities in poor countries, is driving explosive demand for water, prompting rivers in thirsty countries to be tapped for nearly every drop and driving governments to pump out so-called fossil water, the report said.

These are aquifers that are hundreds of thousands of years old and whose extraction is not being replenished by rainfall. Mining them for water today means depriving future generations of liquid treasure.

Fuelling this is misuse or abuse of water, through pollution, unbridled irrigation, pipe leakage and growing of water-craving crops in deserts.

Applying pressure from the other side is climate change, said the report.

Shifts to weather systems, unleashed by man-made global warming, will alter rainfall patterns and reduce snow melt, scientists say.

The water report was first issued in 2003 and is updated every three years. The latest issue, entitled "Water in a Changing World," is published ahead of the fifth World Water Forum, taking place in Istanbul from March 16 to 22.

The mammoth document made these points:

- **DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH** is boosting water stress in developing countries, where hydrological resources are often meagre. The global population is growing by 80 million people a year, 90 percent of it in poorer countries. Demand for water is growing by 64 billion cubic metres (2.2 trillion cubic feet) per year, roughly equivalent to Egypt's annual water demand today.
 - In the past 50 years, **EXTRACTION** from rivers, lakes and aquifers has tripled to help meet population growth and demands for water-intensive food such as rice, cotton, dairy and meat products. Agriculture accounts for 70 percent of the withdrawals, a figure that reaches more than 90 percent in some developing countries.
 - **ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION** from water pollution and excessive extraction now costs many billions of dollars. Damage in the Middle East and North Africa, the world's most water-stressed region, amounts to some nine billion dollars a year, or between 2.1-7.4 percent of GDP.
 - The outlook is mixed for key **UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**, which in 2000 set the deadline of 2015 for halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The target on drinking water is on track but the tally of people without improved sanitation will have decreased only slightly by 2015, from 2.5 billion to 2.4 billion.
 - Water stress, amplified by climate change, will pose a mounting **SECURITY CHALLENGE**. The struggle for water could threaten fragile states and drive regional rivalry.
- "Conflicts about water can occur at all scales," the report warned, adding: "Hydrologic shocks that may occur through climate change increase the risk of major national and international security threats, especially in unstable areas."
- Between 92.4 billion and 148 billion dollars are needed annually in **INVESTMENT** to build and maintain water supply systems, sanitation and irrigation. China and developed countries in Asia alone face financial needs of 38.2-51.4 billion dollars each year.
 - **CONSERVATION** and reuse of water, including recycled sewage, are the watchwords of the future. The report also stressed sustainable water

management, with realistic PRICING to curb waste. It gave the example of India where free or almost-free water had led to huge waste in irrigation, causing soils to be waterlogged and salt-ridden.

Rabbi Moshe Hayyim Ephraim of Sudlikov: "Water is the symbol of lovingkindness [*hesed*]. As water trickles down from a high place to a low one, so too the holy Torah will only be found in one who considers himself lowly." (R. Moshe Hayyim Ephraim, *Degel Mahaneh Ephraim* (Bnei Brak, 1969) to *Vayikra*, p. 149a-b. *Sifra*, Ekev 12; M. *Tanhuma*, *Vayakhel* 8 and *Tavo* 3 (Hebrew).)

So, fill your Miriam's Well with fresh, safe water from the tap before you recite the blessing. Remember that safe, clean water from the tap is not universal, and drinking bottled "spring" water requires more energy, creates more trash, and wastes money!

הלל ל-ל Hallel

Psalm 24

A Psalm of David.

The Earth and its grandeur belong to Adonai; the world and its inhabitants.
G-d founded it upon the seas, and set it firm upon flowing waters.
Who may ascend the mountain of Adonai? Who may rise in G-d's sanctuary?
One who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not used G-d's name in false oaths,
who has not sworn deceitfully.
shall receive a blessing from Adonai, a just reward from the G-d of deliverance.

Psalm 65 + Leviticus 26:1-46

For the Leader. A Psalm. A Song of David. Praise waiteth for Thee, O G-d, in Zion; and unto Thee the vow is performed Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee doth all flesh come. The tale of iniquities is too heavy for me; as for our transgressions, Thou wilt pardon them. Happy is the person whom Thou chooseth, and bringest near, that he may dwell in Thy courts; may we be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, the holy place of Thy temple! With wondrous works dost Thou answer us in righteousness, O G-d of our salvation; Thou the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of the far distant seas; Who by Thy strength settest fast the mountains, who art girded about with might; Who stillest the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the tumult of the peoples; To that they that dwell in the uttermost parts stand in awe of Thy signs; Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. Thou hast remembered the earth, and watered her, greatly enriching her, with the river of G-d that is full of water; Thou preparest them corn, for so preparest Thou her. Watering her ridges abundantly, settling down the furrows thereof, Thou makest her soft with showers; Thou blessest the growth thereof. Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. The pastures of the wilderness do drop; and the hills are girded with joy. The meadows are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, yea, they sing.
Keep My Sabbaths and revere My sanctuary, I am G-d.

If you follow My laws and are careful to keep My commandments, I will provide you with rain at the right time, so that the land will bear its crops and the trees of the field will provide fruit. [You will have so much that] your threshing season will last until your grape harvest, and your grape harvest will last until the time you plant. You will have your fill of food, and [you will] live securely in the land. I will grant peace in the land so that you will sleep without fear. I will rid the land of dangerous animals, and the sword will not pass through your land. You will chase away your enemies, and they will fall before your sword. Five of you will be able to chase away a hundred, and a hundred of you will defeat ten thousand, as your enemies fall before your sword. I will turn to you, making you fertile and numerous, thus keeping My covenant with you. You will continue eating the previous year's crops long after their time, and you will eventually have to clear out the old crops because of the new. I will keep My sanctuary in your midst, and not grow tired of you. I will make My presence felt among you. Thus, I will be a G-d to you, and you will be a nation [dedicated] to Me. I am G-d your Lord. I brought you out from Egypt, where you were slaves. I broke the bands of your yoke, and led you forth with your heads held high. [But this is what will happen] if you do not listen to Me, and do not keep all these commandments. If you come to denigrate My decrees, and grow tired of My laws, then you will not keep all My commandments, and you will have broken My covenant. I will then do the same to you. I will bring upon you feelings of anxiety, along with depression and excitement, destroying your outlook and making life hopeless. You will plant your crop in vain, because your enemies will eat it. I will direct My anger against you, so that you will be defeated by your foes, and your enemies will dominate you. You will flee even when no one is chasing you. If you still do not listen to Me, I will increase the punishment for your sins sevenfold. I will break your aggressive pride, making your skies like iron, and your land like brass. You will exhaust your strength in vain, since your land will not yield its crops, and the trees of the land will not produce fruit. If you are indifferent to Me and lose the desire to obey Me, I will again increase the punishment for your sins sevenfold. I will send wild beasts among you, killing your children, destroying your livestock, and reducing your population, so that the roads will become deserted. If this is not enough to discipline you, and you are still indifferent to Me, then I will also be indifferent to you, but I will again increase the punishment for your sins sevenfold. I will bring a vengeful sword against you to avenge [My] covenant, so that you will huddle in your cities. I will send the plague against you, and give you over to your enemies.

I will cut off your food supply so that ten women will be able to bake bread in one oven, bringing back only [a small] amount of bread. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied.

If you still do not obey Me and remain indifferent to Me, then I will be indifferent to you with a vengeance, bringing yet another sevenfold increase in the punishment for your sins.

You will eat the flesh of your sons, and make a meal of the flesh of your daughters.

When I destroy your altars and smash your sun G-ds, I will let your corpses rot on the remains of your idols.

I will thus have grown tired of you.

I will let your cities fall into ruins, and make your sanctuaries desolate. No longer will I accept the appeasing fragrance [of your sacrifices].

I will make the land so desolate that [even] your enemies who live there will be astonished.

I will scatter you among the nations, and keep the sword drawn against you.

Your land will remain desolate, and your cities in ruins.

Then, as long as the land is desolate and you are in your enemies' land, the land will enjoy its sabbaths. The land will rest and enjoy its sabbatical years.

Thus, as long as it is desolate, [the land] will enjoy the sabbatical rest that you would not give it when you lived there.

I will bring such insecurity upon those of you who survive in your enemies' land that the sound of a rustling leaf will make them flee from the sword. They will fall with no one chasing them.

They will fall over one another as if [chased] by the sword, even when there is no one pursuing. You will have no means of standing up before your foes.

You will thus be destroyed among the nations. The land of your enemies will consume you.

The few of you who survive in your enemies' lands will [realize that] your survival is threatened as a result of your nonobservance. [These few] will also [realize] that their survival has been threatened because of the nonobservance of their fathers.

They will then confess their sins and the sins of their fathers for being false and remaining indifferent to Me.

[It was for this] that I also remained indifferent to them, and brought them into their enemies' land.

But when the time finally comes that their stubborn spirit is humbled, I will forgive their sin.

I will remember My covenant with Jacob as well as My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham. I will remember the land.

[For] the land will have been left behind by them, and will have enjoyed its sabbaths while it lay in desolation without them. The sin [they had committed] by denigrating My laws and growing tired of My decrees, will [also] have been expiated.

Thus, even when they are in their enemies' land, I will not grow so disgusted with them nor so tired of them that I would destroy them and break My covenant with them, since I am G-d their Lord.

I will therefore remember the covenant with their original ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations, so as to be a G-d to them. I am G-d.

These are the decrees, laws and codes that G-d set between G-dself and the Israelites at Mount Sinai through the hand of Moses.

Psalm 66

For the Leader. A Song, a Psalm.
Raise a shout for G-d, all the earth;
sing the glory of G-d's name,
make glorious G-d's praise.
Say to G-d,
"How awesome are Your deeds,
Your enemies cower before Your great strength;
all the earth bows to You,
and sings hymns to You;
all sing hymns to Your name."
Come and see the works of G-d,
who is held in awe by humans for G-d's acts.
G-d turned the sea into dry land;
they crossed the river on foot;
we therefore rejoice in G-d.
G-d rules forever in G-d's might;
G-d's eyes scan the nations;
let the rebellious not assert themselves.
O peoples, bless our G-d,
celebrate G-d's praises;
who has granted us life,
and has not let our feet slip.
You have tried us, O G-d,
refining us, as one refines silver.
You have caught us in a net,
caught us in trammels.
You have let humans ride over us;
we have endured fire and water,
and You have brought us through to prosperity.
I enter Your house with burnt offerings,
I pay my vows to You,
vows that my lips pronounced,
that my mouth uttered in my distress.
I offer up fatlings to You,
with the odor of burning rams;
I sacrifice bulls and he-goats.
Come and hear, all G-d-fearing humans,
as I tell what G-d did for me.
I called aloud to G-d,
glorification on my tongue.
Had I an evil thought in my mind,

the Creator would not have listened.
But G-d did listen;
G-d paid heed to my prayer.
Blessed is G-d who has not turned away my prayer,
of G-d's faithful care from me.

Psalm 98

A Psalm.
Sing to the Creator a new song,
for G-d has worked wonders;
G-d's right hand, G-d's holy arm,
has won G-d victory.
The Creator has manifested G-d's victory,
has displayed G-d's triumph in sight of the nations.
G-d was mindful of G-d's steadfast love and faithfulness
toward the house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth beheld the victory of our G-d.
Raise a shout to the Creator, all the earth,
break into joyous songs of praise!
Sing praise to the Creator with the lyre,
with the lyre and melodious song.
With trumpets and the blast of the horn
raise a shout before the Lord, the Creator.
Let the sea and all within it thunder,
the world and its inhabitants;
let the rivers clap their hands,
the mountains sing joyously together
at the presence of the Creator,
for G-d is coming to rule the earth;
G-d will rule the world justly,
and its peoples with equity.

Psalm 100

A psalm for praise.
Raise a shout for the Creator, all the earth;
worship the Creator in gladness;
come into G-d's presence with shouts of joy.
Acknowledge that the Creator is G-d;
G-d made us and we are G-d's,
G-d's people, the flock G-d tends.
Enter G-d's gates with praise,
G-d's courts with acclamation.
Praise G-d!
Bless G-d's name!
For the Creator is good;
G-d's steadfast love is eternal;
G-d's faithfulness is for all generations.

Psalm 104

Bless the Creator, O my soul;
O Creator, my G-d, You are very great;
You are clothed in glory and majesty,
wrapped in a robe of light;
You spread the heavens like a tent cloth.
G-d sets the rafters of G-d's lofts in the waters,
makes the clouds G-d's chariot,
moves on the wings of the wind.
G-d makes the winds G-d's messengers,
fiery flames G-d's servants.
G-d established the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never totter.
You made the deep cover it as a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
They fled at Your blast,
rushed away at the sound of Your thunder,
—mountains rising, valleys sinking—
to the place You established for them.
You set bounds they must not pass
so that they never again cover the earth.
You make springs gush forth in torrents;
they make their way between the hills,
giving drink to all the wild beasts;
the wild asses slake their thirst.
The birds of the sky dwell beside them
and sing among the foliage.
You water the mountains from Your lofts;
the earth is sated from the fruit of Your work.
You make the grass grow for the cattle,
and herbage for human labors
that we may get food out of the earth—
wine that cheers the hearts of humans
oil that makes the face shine,
and bread that sustains life.
The trees of the Creator drink their fill,
the cedars of Lebanon, G-d's own planting,
where birds make their nests;
the stork has her home in the junipers.
The high mountains are for wild goats;
the crags are a refuge for rock-badgers.
G-d made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows when to set.
You bring on darkness and it is night,
when all the beasts of the forests stir.
The lions roar for prey,
seeking their food from G-d.
When the sun rises, they come home

and couch in their dens.
Humans then go out to their work,
to their labor until the evening.
How many are the things You have made, O Creator;
You have made them all with wisdom;
the earth is full of Your creations.
There is the sea, vast and wide,
with its creatures beyond number,
living things, small and great.
There go the ships,
and Leviathan that You formed to sport with.
All of them look to You
to give them their food when it is due.
Give it to them, they gather it up;
open Your hand, they are well satisfied;
hide Your face, they are terrified;
take away their breath, they perish
and turn again into dust;
send back Your breath, they are created
and You renew the face of the earth.
May the glory of the Creator endure forever;
may the Creator rejoice in G-d's works!
G-d looks at the earth and it trembles;
G-d touches the mountains and they smoke.
I will sing to the Creator as long as I live;
all my life I will chant hymns to my G-d.
May my prayer be pleasing to G-d;
I will rejoice in the Creator.
May sinners disappear from the earth,
and the wicked be no more.
Bless the Creator, O my soul.
Hallelujah.

Psalm 147

Hallelujah.
It is good to chant hymns to our G-d;
it is pleasant to sing glorious praise.
The Creator rebuilds Jerusalem;
G-d gathers in the exiles of Israel.
G-d heals their broken hearts,
and binds up their wounds.
G-d reckoned the number of the stars;
to each G-d gave its name.
Great is our Creator and full of power;
G-d's wisdom is beyond reckoning.
The Creator gives courage to the lowly,
and brings the wicked down to dust.
Sing to the Creator a song of praise,

chant a hymn with a lyre to our G-d,
who covers the heavens with clouds,
provides rain for the earth,
makes mountains put forth grass;
who gives the beasts their food,
to the raven's brood what they cry for.
G-d does not prize the strength of horses,
nor value the fleetness of humans;
but the Creator values those who fear G-d,
those who depend on G-d's faithful care.
O Jerusalem, glorify the Creator;
praise your G-d, O Zion!
For G-d made the bars of your gates strong,
and blessed your children within you.
G-d endows your realm with well-being,
and satisfies you with choice wheat.
G-d sends forth G-d's word to the earth;
G-d's command runs swiftly.
G-d lays down snow like fleece,
scatters frost like ashes.
G-d tosses down hail like crumbs—
who can endure G-d's icy cold?
G-d issues a command—it melts them;
G-d breathes—the waters flow.
G-d issued G-d's commands to Jacob,
G-d's statutes and rules to Israel.
G-d did not do so for any other nation;
of such rules they know nothing.
Hallelujah.

Hosea 4:1-3

Hear the word of the Creator,
O people of Israel!
For the Creator has a case
Against the inhabitants of this land,
Because there is no honesty and no goodness
And no obedience to G-d in the land.
[False] swearing, dishonesty, and murder,
And theft and adultery are rife;
Crime follows upon crime!
For that, the earth is withered:
Everything that dwells on it languishes—
Beasts of the field and birds of the sky—
Even the fish of the sea perish.

Proverbs 8:22-36

The Creator created me at the beginning of G-d's course
As the first of G-d's works of old.

In the distant past I was fashioned,
At the beginning, at the origin of earth.
There was still no deep when I was brought forth,
No springs rich in water;
Before the mountains were sunk,
Before the hills I was born.
G-d had not yet made earth and fields,
Or the world's first clumps of clay.
I was there when G-d set the heavens into place;
When G-d fixed the horizon upon the deep;
When G-d made the heavens above firm,
And the fountains of the deep gushed forth;
When G-d assigned the sea its limits,
So that its waters never transgress G-d's command;
When G-d fixed the foundations of the earth,
I was with G-d as a confidant,
A source of delight every day,
Rejoicing before G-d at all times,
Rejoicing in G-d's inhabited world,
Finding delight with humankind.
Now, children, listen to me;
Happy are they who keep my ways.
Heed discipline and become wise;
Do not spurn it.
Happy is the person who listens to me,
Coming early to my gates each day,
Waiting outside my doors.
For those who find me find life
And obtain favor from the Creator.
But he who misses me destroys himself;
All who hate me love death.

Proverbs 12:5-8, 10-11

The purposes of the righteous are justice,
The schemes of the wicked are deceit.
The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush,
But the speech of the upright saves them.
Overturn the wicked and they are gone,
But the house of the righteous will endure.
One is commended according to one's intelligence.
A twisted mind is held up to contempt...
A righteous person knows the needs of his beast,
But the compassion of the wicked is cruelty.
One who tills one's land will have food in plenty,
But one who pursues vanities is devoid of sense.

Ecclesiastes 1:4-9

One generation goes, another comes,

But the earth remains the same forever.
The sun rises, and the sun sets—
And glides back to where it rises.
Southward blowing,
Turning northward,
Ever turning blows the wind;
On its rounds the wind returns.
All streams flow into the sea,
Yet the sea is never full;
To the place [from] which they flow
The streams flow back again.
All such things are wearisome:
No person can ever state them;
The eye never has enough of seeing,
Nor the ear enough of hearing.
Only that shall happen
Which has happened,
Only that occur
Which has occurred;
There is nothing new
Beneath the sun!

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

A season is set for everything, a time for ever experience under heaven: A time for being born and a time for dying, A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted; A time for slaying and a time for healing, A time for tearing down and a time for building up; A time for weeping and a time for laughing, A time for wailing and a time for dancing; A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones, A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces; A time for seeking and a time for losing, A time for keeping and a time for discarding; A time for ripping and a time for sewing, A time for silence and a time for speaking; A time for loving and a time for hating; a time for war and a time for peace.

Isaiah 24

Behold, the Creator will strip the earth bare, and lay it waste, and twist its surface, and scatter its inhabitants. Layperson and priest shall fare alike, slave and master, handmaid and mistress, buyer and seller, lender and borrower, creditor and debtor. The earth shall be bare, bare; it shall be plundered, plundered; for it is the Creator who spoke this word.
The earth is withered, sear; the world languishes, it is sear; the most exalted people of the earth languish. For the earth was defiled under its inhabitants; because they transgressed teachings, violated laws, broke the ancient covenant. That is why a curse consumes the earth, and its inhabitants pay the penalty; that is why earth's dwellers have dwindled, and but few people are left.

The new wine fails, the vine languishes; and all the merry-hearted sigh. Stilled is the merriment of timbrels, ended the clamor of revelers, stilled the merriment of lyres. They drink their wine without song; liquor tastes bitter to the drinker. Towns are broken, empty; every house is shut, none enters; even over wine, a cry goes up in the streets: the sun has set on all joy, the gladness of the earth is banished. Desolation is left in the town and the gate is battered to ruins. For

thus shall it be among the peoples in the midst of the earth: as when the olive tree is beaten out, like gleanings when the vintage is over.

These shall lift up their voices, exult in the majesty of the Creator. They shall shout from the sea: therefore, honor the Creator with lights in the coastlands of the sea—the name of the Creator, the G-d of Israel. From the end of the earth we hear singing: Glory to the righteous! And I said: I waste away! I waste away! Woe is me! The faithless have acted faithlessly; the faithless have broken faith!...

The earth is breaking, breaking; the earth is crumbling, crumbling. The earth is tottering, tottering; the earth is swaying like a drunkard; it is rocking to and fro like a hut. Its iniquity shall weigh it down, and it shall fall, to rise no more...

Then the moon shall be ashamed, and the sun shall be abashed. For the Creator will reign on Mount Zion and Jerusalem, and the Presence will be revealed to G-d's elders.

Isaiah 55:12-56:2

Yea, you shall leave in joy and be led home secure. Before you, mount and hill shall shout aloud, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the brier, a cypress shall rise; instead of the nettle, a myrtle shall rise. These shall stand as a testimony to G-d, as an everlasting sign that shall no perish. Thus said the Creator: Observe what is right and do what is just; for soon My salvation shall come, and My deliverance be revealed. Happy is the person who does this, one who holds fast to it: who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and stays one's hand from doing any evil.

Environmental Poems and Readings

Midrash Psalms 117: The sending of rain is an even greater than the giving of the Torah. The Torah was a joy for Israel only, but rain gives joy to the entire world, including animals and birds.

Genesis Rabbah 10:7: Even though you may think them superfluous in this world, creatures such as flies, bugs, and gnats have their allotted task in the scheme of creation.

Genesis Rabbah 13:3: Without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, the earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist.

Leviticus Rabbah 25:3: How can a person of flesh and blood follow G-d?...G-d, from the very beginning of creation, was occupied before all else with planting, as it is written, "And first of all, the Eternal G-d planted a Garden in Eden." Therefore...occupy yourselves first and foremost with planting.

Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13: See my works, how fine and excellent they are! All that I created, I created for you. Reflect on this, and do not corrupt or desolate my world; for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you.

Abraham ibn Ezra:

"Wherever I turn my eyes, around on Earth or to the heavens
I see you in the field of stars
I see you in the yield of land
In every breath and sound, a blade of grass, a simple flower,

An echo of Your holy Name.”

Maimonides: The quality of urban air compared to the air in the deserts and the forests is like thick and turbulent water compared to pure and light water. In the cities with their tall buildings and narrow roads, the pollution that comes from their residents, their waste makes their entire air reeking and thick although no one is aware of it.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav:
Master of the Universe,
Grant me the ability to be alone;
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day
among the trees and grass—among all growing things—
and there may I be alone, and enter into prayer,
to talk with the one to whom I belong.

Israel Meir ha-Kohen: When a group of people are sailing in a boat, none of them has a right to bore a hole under his own seat.

Albert Schweitzer: The harvested fields bathed in the autumn mists speak of G-d and G-d's goodness far more vividly than any human lips.

Anne Frank: The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and G-d. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that G-d wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature...I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.

Wendell Berry: Our predicament now, I believe, requires us to learn to read and understand the Bible in the light of the present fact of Creation.

Chad Gadya: The interrelatedness of all things

We Jews, in affirming the oneness of G-d, also assert the interrelatedness of all things. A good example of this can be found in an interesting aspect of the Hebrew language; there is no Rabbinic Hebrew word for nature. The environment, at that time, was not seen as “other.” This concept is also clear in the writings of Martin Buber and his notion of I-Thou relationships.

I contemplate a tree.

I can accept it as a picture: a rigid pillar in a flood of light, or splashes of green traversed by the gentleness of the blue silver ground.

I can feel it as movement: the flowing veins around the sturdy, striving core, the sucking of the roots, the breathing of the leaves, the infinite commerce with earth and air—and the growing itself in its darkness.

I can assign it to a species and observe it as an instance, with an eye to its construction and its way of life.

I can overcome its uniqueness and form so rigorously that I recognize it only as an expression of the law—those laws according to which a constant opposition of forces is continually adjusted, or those laws according to which the elements mix and separate.

I can dissolve it into a number, into a pure relation between numbers, and eternalize it.

Throughout all of this the tree remains my object and has its place and its time span, its kind and condition.

But it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It. The power of exclusiveness has seized me.

This does not require me to forego any of the modes of contemplation. There is nothing that I must not see in order to see, and there is no knowledge that I must forget. Rather is everything, picture and movement, species and instance, law and number included and inseparably fused.

Whatever belongs to the tree is included: its form and its mechanics, its colors and its chemistry, its conversation with the elements and its conversation with the stars—all this in its entirety.

The tree is no impression, no play of my imagination, no aspect of a mood; it confronts me bodily and has to deal with me as I must deal with it—only differently.

One should not try to dilute the meaning of the relation: relation is reciprocity. Does the tree then have consciousness, similar to our own? I have no experience of that. But thinking that you have brought this off in your own case, must you divide the indivisible? What I encounter is neither the soul of a tree nor a dryad, but the tree itself.

(Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, Touchstone, 1996, p. 57-59)

The part of the seder that most clearly symbolizes this interrelatedness is the children's song, Chad Gadya. Though at first the words seem silly, it soon becomes clear that the intent of the writer was more than entertainment. The song describes the way all nature, including humans, are interrelated and rely upon each other.

The created world is both bountiful and fragile. A Jewish environmental activist suggests that treating it with respect and care should be an integral part of our living out the Jewish concepts of Torah (instruction/learning), avodah (service/worship/work), and gemilut hasadim (acts of kindness).

"O child of Adam, when you return to Nature, on that day you shall open your eyes... You shall know that you have returned to yourself, for in hiding from Nature, you hid from yourself... And you will recognize on that day...you must renew everything: your food and your drink, your dress and your home, the character of your work and the way that you learn -- everything."

So wrote Aaron David Gordon, the pioneer-philosopher of Labor Zionism, at the dawn of the kibbutz movement in 1910. A century later, with species disappearing and pollution rising and the globe warming, it's time to do what Gordon said, in ways he could not have imagined, and indeed "renew everything." We must bring our entire being to the sacred work of Creation care -- and in so doing Jews are blessed with millennia of thought and experience to draw upon.

Awareness

The Jewish tradition offers myriad opportunities for uttering a formulaic blessing. We've got blessings for seeing heads of state, Torah scholars, and ugly people. Blessings over sunsets, meteors, rainbows, reunions, and bad news. Blessings for bread and baked goods and fruit and vegetables, all different. In the Talmud, Rabbi Meir suggests reciting 100 blessings each day (*Menachot* 43b) -- one every ten minutes of our waking lives. In other words, Jews should be constantly aware of the world around us, and should respond through gratitude and prayer.

But it doesn't stop there. Among the things to be aware of is our interdependence, that "one glorious chain of love, of giving and receiving, [which] unites all living beings" (Samson Raphael Hirsch, 19th century Germany, *Nineteen Letters*, 4). And once we are aware of the bounty and fragility of Creation, we naturally become committed to protecting it, and making sure that others -- other people, other creatures, other generations -- get to enjoy its fragile bounty as well.

There is really no other way. Through *mitzvot*, *minhagim* and *musar* commandments, customs and ethics, Judaism makes ecological claims on us. A meaningful practicing Jewish life is by definition already an eco-conscious one. It works in reverse, too: Judaism, or any spiritual tradition for that matter, grounds and enriches our environmental commitments.

A.D. Gordon taught that everything must change when returning to Nature -- but as we know from Lao Tze, the Chinese teacher of Taoism, even a thousand-mile *tiyyul* (hike) begins with one step. Here, then, are a few easy steps we can all take, arranged in the three pillars upon which the world stands (Mishnah Avot 1:2):

Torah

Learning, law, ethics, stories, history, theology, psychology, cosmology, and more are all included in "Torah." Just sticking with the traditional etymology, "instruction," Torah covers a lot of ground. A fine example comes at the very beginning, which for ecological purposes is a very good place to start -- Genesis 1 and 2, the opening chapters of our sacred writings.

Some people try to justify ecocide through Genesis 1:28, where G-d blessed the first humans saying "fill the Earth and subdue it, and have dominion." Forget the obvious, that dominion and destruction differ -- tradition gives us three ecological interpretations of even these potentially problematic verses). First, Rashi (11th century French commentator) cites a midrash that links "dominate" and "fall" (*yirdu /yer'du*), so dominion becomes conditional on our doing a good job. Second, the very next verses dictate a vegetarian diet, so in context "dominion" doesn't even allow the destruction of one animal -- much less the wholesale extinction of thousands of species each year.

And Maimonides (12th century Spanish/Egyptian philosopher) says our verse isn't prescriptive, it's descriptive. (*Guide of the Perplexed* 3:13.) G-d made us *a part of* Creation, with DNA 99% identical to that of our orangutan cousins, while also making us *apart from* Creation. Small differences, like opposable thumbs and enlarged cerebella, mean we *will* rule -- but how? The verse in question

comes right at the outset, so that the whole rest of Torah can help us figure out how to rule sacredly and sustainably.

That's just the beginning. In the next chapter (Genesis 2:15), human (Adam) enters ecosystem (Eden) *l'ovdah uleshomrah*, to work/serve/till and to guard/tend it -- that is, we can improve or maintain the Earth, but are forbidden from making it worse. And Torah wisdom goes on from there. All of Torah, meaning all of our Jewish learning, is filled with ecological insight. (See the bibliography, accessible in the toolbar to the right, for some suggested reading.)

Avodah

Another tough-to-translate word, *avodah* means work, prayer, and service. How can we "green" these aspects of our lives? At work, we can both prevent the worst and push for the best. For instance, at minimum we can recycle, while also working on purchasing only recycled products (paper, carpet, bathroom supplies, bookshelves, etc). As A.D. Gordon often said, "to Labor, to Nature!" Work/*avodah* is inextricably linked with Creation -- our economy will outlive Greenspan [Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve], but can't live without the green chlorophyll on which our food chain is based.

Avodah also means prayer, and through our prayer book we get most powerfully in touch with the Creator and with Creation. In the daily morning liturgy G-d is called "the one who in goodness every day renews the work of Creation"--a renewal in which we have been made co-partners. We are warned not to turn away and serve false G-ds (idols, or limitless growth perhaps, or pop stars and sports "heroes?"), lest nature turn against us and we "be speedily evicted from the good land G-d gives us" (second paragraph of Sh'ma, from Deut. 11). The entire liturgy cultivates our humility before G-d and the world, something this ecological age desperately needs to learn. Prayer/*avodah* is just what the Doctor-on-high ordered.

And as "service," *avodah* can be all about helping others and the community by adopting a more ecologically conscious lifestyle. We can best be "of service" to those in poverty or in developing countries by using less, and helping them attain better lifestyles in less destructive ways. We can best be "of service" to future generations by not killing off too many species, or changing the climate too much, so they can enjoy Creation as we do. This is "environmental justice," where pursuing justice (Deuteronomy 16:20) for people means safeguarding their/our environment, now and forever. And what about being "of service" to Creation itself?

Gemilut Hasadim

Literally "acts of loving-kindness", *gemilut hasadim* brings us to concrete actions. If Eco-Torah means "learn it", and Eco-Avodah means "love it", then Eco-Gemilut-Hasadim means "live it!" There's no shortage of specific things we can (and in the language of Jewish law, *halacha*, should) do to live that ecologically conscious Jewish life:

* *Tza'ar ba'alei hayim*, kindness to animals: Judaism teaches us to put the needs of our animals even before our own. It starts with pets and domesticated

animals, but can also include wildlife. Today this and related values might even suggest vegetarianism (see Arthur Green, *Seek My Face, Speak My Name*).

* Eco-Zionism, protecting the *Eretz* (land) of *Yisrael*: That small, densely populated, sacred land is being overused and abused. Our love for Israel and passion for Creation can unite through supporting environmental efforts in our homeland.

* Eco-Kashrut, a meta-ethics of Jewish consumption: Items are either "acceptable" (kosher) or "not OK" (treif), based on a set of ritual-ethical-spiritual laws. Yet narrowly speaking, styrofoam plates are kosher. We can apply *kashrut* to how food was produced and how it's served, and from there expand it from food and drink to oil, forest management, corporations and governments.

* *Bal Tashchit*, forbidding wanton waste: a wartime prohibition against cutting down enemy's trees (Deuteronomy 20:19) suggests that all needless waste is an affront to G-d. In a 13th century text (*Sefer Hahinukh* 529), righteous people grieve when even a mustard seed is wasted. Does our waste -- greenhouse gas emissions, non-composted garbage, vacuous TV programs -- pass "the mustard seed test?"

Next Steps

We've hardly scratched the surface. Though Judaism has offered ecological wisdom for millennia, only now is there a Jewish environmental movement...There's so much more -- in the worlds of Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Hasadim, together -- that we can do to live an environmentally conscious Jewish life. "One who lives in this way shall never be shaken" (Psalms 15:5). May we all learn to live this way -- simply -- so that others may simply live.

The concept of interrelatedness can be found in such essential environmental works as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Though in this excerpt the author speaks mainly regarding our behaviors toward plant life, of course her points apply to all forms of life, and to all our actions toward the planet. Carson says:

Water, soil, and the earth's green mantle of plants make up the world that supports the animal life of the earth. Although modern man seldom remembers the fact, he could not exist without the plants that harness the sun's energy and manufacture the basic foodstuffs he depends upon for life. Our attitude toward plants is a singularly narrow one. If we see any immediate utility in a plant we foster it. If for any reason we find its presence undesirable or merely a matter of indifference, we may condemn it to destruction forthwith. Besides the various plants that are poisonous to man or his livestock, or crowd out food plants, many are marked for destruction merely because, according to our narrow view, they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Many others are destroyed merely because they happen to be associates of the unwanted plants.

The earth's vegetation is part of a web of life in which there are intimate and essential relations between plants and the earth, between plants and animals. Sometimes we have no choice but to disturb these relationships, but we should do so thoughtfully, with full awareness that what we do may have consequences remote in time and place.

--from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, first Mariner Books edition, 2002, p. 63-64.

There is a current environmental theory (previously called the "Gaia hypothesis," now simply described as "earth systems sciences") that questions the assumption that plants, humans, and animals are all independent organisms, and asserts that the planet at least, and perhaps the universe, is a single, living organism. James Lovelock, who proposed the theory, defined Gaia as "a complex entity involving the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and soil; the totality constituting a feedback or cybernetic system which seeks an optimal physical and chemical environment for life on this planet." (*Gaia--A new look at life on Earth* by J E Lovelock, publ. Oxford University Press, 2000; p. 10) Our ancestors, the founders of Judaism, would have felt at home in discussions with Lovelock.

Psalms 104:14-20, 145:16, 147:7-9

You make the grass grow for the cattle, and herbage for human labor that humans may get food out of the earth—wine that cheers the hearts of humans oil that makes the face shine, and bread that sustains human life. The trees of the Creator drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon, G-d's own planting, where birds make their nests; the stork has her home in the junipers. The high mountains are for wild goats; the crags are a refuge for rock-badgers. G-d made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows when to set. G-d brings on darkness and it is night, when all the beasts of the forests stir. G-d gives openhandedly, feeding every creature to its heart's content. Sing to the Creator a song of praise, chant a hymn with a lyre to our G-d, who covers the heavens with clouds, provides rain for the earth, makes mountains put forth grass; who gives the beasts their food, to the raven's brood what they cry for.

Genesis 1:29-31

G-d said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food. And to all the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to everything that creeps on earth, in which there is the breath of life, [I give] all the green plants for food." And it was so. And G-d saw all that G-d had made, and found it very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Job 38:41, 39:1-9

Who provides food for the raven when his young cry out to G-d and wander about without food? Do you know the season when the mountain goats give birth? Can you make the time when the hinds calve? Can you count the months they must complete? Do you know the season they give birth, when they couch to bring forth their offspring, to deliver their young? Their young are healthy; they grow up in the open; they leave and return no more. Who sets the wild ass free? Who loosens the bonds of the onager, whose home I have made in the wilderness, the salt land his dwelling-place? He scoffs at the tumult of the city, does not hear the shouts of the driver. He roams the hills for his pasture; he searches for any green thing. Would the wild ox agree to serve you? Would he spend the night at your crib?

Job 28

“Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place for gold that they refine. Iron is taken out of the earth, and copper is smelted from the ore. Humankind puts an end to darkness and searches out to the farthest limit the ore in gloom and deep darkness. Humankind opens shafts in a valley away from where anyone lives; they are forgotten by travelers; they hang in the air, far away from humankind; they swing to and fro. As for the earth, out of it comes bread, but underneath it is turned up as by fire. Its stones are the place of sapphires, and it has dust of gold. “That path no bird of prey knows, and the falcon’s eye has not seen it. The proud beasts have not trodden it; the lion has not passed over it. “Humans put their hands to the flinty rock and overturn mountains by the roots. They cut out channels in the rocks, and their eyes see every precious thing. Humans dam up the streams so that they do not trickle, and the thing that is hidden they bring out to light. “But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Humankind does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living. The deep says, ‘It is not in me,’ and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’ It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. “From where, then, does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. Abaddon and Death say, ‘We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.’

“G-d understands the way to it, and knows its place. For G-d looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When G-d gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, when G-d made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then saw it and declared it; G-d established it, and searched it out. And said to humankind, ‘Behold, the fear of the Creator, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’”

The extraordinary events of the past few years, with the...worldwide awakening to the consequences of human destruction of the flora and fauna and the ecosystem that supports them, signal a major change in focus. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that the [human focus] widened to include, in addition to all oppressed human beings, all oppressed creatures as well as planet earth.

[A]ll theologies are written from particular contexts. The one context which has been neglected and is now emerging is the broadest as well as the most basic: the context of the planet, a context which we all share and without which we cannot survive. It seems to me that this latest shift in 20th-century theology is not to a different issue from that of liberation theologies, but to a deepening of it, a recognition that the fate of the oppressed and the fate of the earth are inextricably interrelated, for we all live on one planet – a planet vulnerable to our destructive behavior.

The link between justice and ecological issues becomes especially evident in light of the dualistic, hierarchical mode of Western thought in which a superior and an inferior are correlated: male/ female, white people/people of color, heterosexual/homosexual, able-bodied/physically challenged, culture/ nature, mind/body, human/nonhuman. These correlated terms – most often normatively ranked – reveal clearly that domination and destruction of the

natural world is inexorably linked with the domination and oppression of the poor, people of color, and all others that fall on the 'inferior' side of the correlation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the ancient and deep identification of women and nature, an identification so profound that it touches the very marrow of our being: our birth from the bodies of our mothers and our nourishment from the body of the earth. The power of nature – and of women – to give and withhold life epitomizes the inescapable connection between the two and thus the necessary relationship of justice and ecological issues. As many have noted, the status of women and the status of nature have been historically commensurate: as goes one, so goes the other.

A similar correlation can be seen between other forms of human oppression and a disregard for the natural world. Unless ecological health is maintained, for instance, the poor and others with limited access to scarce goods (due to race, class, gender, or physical capability) cannot be fed. Grain must be grown for all to have bread. The characteristic Western mind-set has accorded intrinsic value, and hence duties of justice, principally to the upper half of the dualism and has considered it appropriate for those on the lower half to be used for the benefit of those on the upper. Western multinational corporations, for example, regard it as 'reasonable' and 'normal' to use Third World people and natural resources for their own financial benefit, at whatever cost to the indigenous peoples and the health of their lands.

The connection among the various forms of oppression is increasingly becoming clear to many...In the closing years of the 20th century we are being called to do something unprecedented: to think wholistically, to think about 'everything that is,' because everything on this planet is interrelated and interdependent and hence the fate of each is tied to the fate of the whole...

One of the principal insights of both feminism and post-modern science is that while everything is interrelated and interdependent, everything (maple leaves, stars, deer, dirt – and not just human beings) is different from everything else. Individuality and interrelatedness are features of the universe hence; no one voice or single species is the only one that counts. If advocacy, collegiality, and difference characterized theological reflection and if the agenda of theology widened to include the context of our planet, some significant changes would occur...

First, it would mean a more or less common agenda for theological reflection, though one with an almost infinite number of different tasks. The encompassing agenda would be to deconstruct and reconstruct the central symbols of the...tradition in favour of life and its fulfillment, keeping the liberation the oppressed, including the earth and all its creatures, in central focus. That is so broad, so inclusive an agenda that it allows for myriad ways to construe it and carry it out. It does, however, turn the eyes of theologians away from heaven and toward the earth; or, more accurately, it causes us to connect the starry heavens with the earth, as the 'common' creation story claims, telling us that everything in the universe, including stars, dirt, robins, black holes, sunsets, plants, and human beings, is the product of an enormous explosion billions of years ago. In whatever ways we might reconstruct the symbols of G-d, human

being and earth, this can no longer be done in a dualistic fashion, for the heavens and the earth are one phenomenon, albeit an incredibly ancient, rich, and varied one...

Theology, along with other institutions, fields of study, and expertise, can deepen our sense of complicity in the earth's decay. In addition to turning our eyes and hearts to an appreciation of the beauty, richness, and singularity of our planet through a renewed theology of creation and nature, theology ought also to underscore and elaborate on the myriad ways that we personally and corporately have ruined and continue to ruin G-d's splendid creation – acts which we and no other creature can knowingly commit... Human responsibility for the fate of the earth is a recent and terrible knowledge; our loss of innocence is total, for we know what we have done. If theologians were to accept this context and agenda of their work, they would see themselves in dialogue with all those in other areas and fields similarly engaged: those who feed the homeless and fight for animal rights; the cosmologists who tell us of the common origins (and hence interrelatedness) of all forms of matter and life; economists who examine how we must change if the earth is to support its population; the legislators and judges who work to advance civil rights for those discriminated against in our society; the Greenham women who picket nuclear plants, and the women of northern India who literally 'hug' trees to protect them from destruction, and so on and on.

Theology is an 'earthy' affair in the best sense of that word: it helps people to live rightly, appropriately, on the earth, in our home. It is, as the...traditions have always insisted, concerned with 'right relations,' relations with G-d, neighbour, and self, but now the context has broadened to include what has dropped out of the picture in the past few hundred years– the oppressed neighbors, the other creatures, and the earth that supports us all. This shift could be seen as a return to the roots of a tradition that has insisted on the creator, redeemer G-d as the source and salvation of all that is. We now know that 'all that is' is vaster, more complex, more awesome, more interdependent, than any other people have ever known. The new theologies that emerge from such a context have the opportunity to view divine transcendence in deeper, more awesome, and more intimate ways than ever before. They also have the obligation to understand human beings and all other forms of life as radically interrelated and interdependent as well as to understand our special responsibility for the planet's well-being.

--from "An Earthly Theological Agenda," by Sallie McFague in Carol Adams (ed.) *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* (Continuum, 1999), pp. 84-98.

Psalm 115:1-11

לֹא לָנוּ יְיָ לֹא לָנוּ כִּי לֹשְׁמֵרַתְךָ כְּבוֹד, עַל חֶסֶדְךָ עַל אֲמִתְּךָ. לָמָּה יִאֲמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם, אֵיךְ נָא אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּם.
וְאֵלֵהּ יִנּוּ בְשֵׁמֶיךָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר חִפְצָךָ עָשָׂה. עֲצַב יְהוָה כֹּסֶף וְזָהָב, מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם. פֶּה לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבַּר, רֹגְלֵיהֶם
עֵינֵיהֶם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ. אֲזָנֵיהֶם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמָעוּ, אֶפְרָיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְיִחוּ. יְדֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַמְיִשוּ, רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ,
כִּי לֹא יִהְיוּ בְּגִרְוֹנָם. כִּי מוֹהָם יִהְיוּ עֵשׂ יְהוָה, כֹּל אֲשֶׁר בְּטַח בְּהֶם: יֵשׁ רָאֵל בְּטַח בְּיְיָ, עֲזָרְךָ
וּמִגְגֹּם הוּא. בְּיַת אֲהָרָן בְּטַחוּ בְּיְיָ, עֲזָרְךָ וּמִגְגֹּם הוּא. יִרְאִי יְיָ בְּטַחוּ בְּיְיָ, עֲזָרְךָ וּמִגְגֹּם הוּא:

Lo lanu, Adonai, lo lanu, ki l'shimcha tein kavod, al chasd'cha al amitecha. Lamah yomru hagoyim, ayeih na Eloheihem. Veiloheinu vashamayim, kol asher chafeitz asah. Atzabeiheh

eini min dimah, et ragli midechi. Et-haleich lifnei Adonai, b'artzot hachayim. He-emanti ki adabeir, ani aniti m'od. Ani amarti v'chof'zi, kol ha-adam kozeiv

I love that G-d hears my supplications.

Because G-d has inclined G-d's ear to me, I will call upon G-d as long as I live.

The cords of death encircled me; the pains of the grave have overtaken me;

I found trouble and sorrow.

Then I called upon the name of G-d: "O G-d, save my life!"

Gracious is G-d, and righteous and our G-d is merciful.

G-d protects the simple;

I was brought low and G-d saved me.

Return to your rest, O my soul, for G-d has been kind to you.

You delivered me from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from stumbling.

I shall walk before G-d in the lands of the living.

I kept faith even when I cry out: "I am greatly afflicted."

I kept faith even when I said in haste: "All men are deceitful."

Psalm 116:12-19

מָה אֲשׁוּב לַיהוָה, כִּי כָל־תַּגְּמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי. כֹּסֵי יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשֶׁר אֶתְּשֶׂה, וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר לִי, נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל־עַמּוּ.
יִקְרַב עֵינַי יְיָ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְתֵהָרֶם לְחַסְדָּיו. אֲנִי יְיָ אֲנִי עֲבָדְךָ, בְּיָד אֲמַתְךָ פִּתְחֵי לְמוֹסְדֵי. לְךָ
אֶזְבַּח זֶבַח תּוֹדָה וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר לִי נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל־עַמּוּ. בְּחִצְרוֹת בַּיִת יְיָ בְּתוֹכֵי
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הַלְלִיָּהּ.

Mah ashiv l'Adonai, kol tagmulohi alay. Kos y'shuot esa, uv'sheim Adonai ekra. N'darai l'Adonai ashaleim, negdah na l'chol amo. Yakar b'einei Adonai, hamav'tah lachasidav. Anah Adonai ki ani avdecha, ani avd'cha ben amatecha, pitachta l'moseiray. L'cha ezbach zevach todah, uv'sheim Adonai ekra. N'darai l'Adonai ashaleim, negdah na l'chol amo. B'chatzrot beit Adonai, b'tocheichi y'rushalayim, hal'luyah.

How can I repay G-d for all G-d's kind acts toward me?

I will raise the cup of salvations, and call upon the name of G-d.

My vows to G-d I will pay in the presence of all G-d's people.

Precious in the sight of G-d is the death of G-d's pious followers.

G-d, I am truly your servant; I am your servant, the child of your consort;

You have loosened my bonds.

To you I sacrifice a thanksgiving offering, and call upon your name.

My vows to G-d I will pay in the presence of all his people,

In the courts of G-d's house, in the midst of Jerusalem.

Halleluyah!

Psalm 117

הַלְלוּ אֶת־יְיָ, כֹּל־גּוֹיִם, שֶׁבַח־הוֹדוּ כֹּל־הָאֲמִיּוֹת. כִּי גִבֹר עָלַי יְיָ וְיִנוּחַסְדּוֹ, וְיִאֲמַת יְיָ לְעוֹלָם הַלְלִיָּהּ:

Hal'lu et Adonai, kol goyim, shab'chu-hu, kol ha-umim. Ki gavar aleinu chasdo, ve-emet Adonai l'olam, hal'luyah.

Give thanks to G-d, all you nations; praise him, all you peoples!

For G-d's kindness overwhelms us, and the truth of G-d is forever, Halleluyah!

Psalm 118:1-4

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה לְכִי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:

יְיָ אָמַר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:

יְיָ אָמַר נָא בֵּית אֱהָרֵן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:

י' אמרו נא יראי יי, כ' י לעולם חסדו:

Hodu l'Adonai ki tov, ki l'olam chasdo.

Yomar na yisra-eil, ki l'olam chasdo.

Yomru na veit aharon, ki l'olam chasdo.

Yomru na yirei Adonai, ki l'olam chasdo.

Give thanks to G-d, for G-d is good;

G-d's kindness endures forever.

Let Israel say: G-d's kindness endures forever.

Let the house of Aaron say: G-d's kindness endures forever.

Let those who revere G-d say: G-d's kindness endures forever.

Psalm 118:5-29

מִן הַמַּצְרִים קָרָאתִי יְהוָה, עֲנֵנִי בְּמִרְחֹב יְהוָה. יי לִי לֹא אֵירָא, מִהַיְעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם. יי לִי בַּעֲזָרִי, וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה
בְּשִׁנְאֵי טוֹב לְחַסּוֹת בַּיְיָ, מִבְּטֹחַ בְּאָדָם. טוֹב לְחַסּוֹת בַּיְיָ מִבְּטֹחַ בְּנְדִיבִים. כָּל גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי בַשָּׁם יי כִּי
אֲמִילָם. סָבְבוּנִי גַם סָבְבוּנִי בַשָּׁם יי כִּי אֲמִילָם. סָבְבוּנִי כְדַבְרֵי דַעֲכּוֹ כִּי אֲשֶׁר קוֹצִים, בַּשָּׁם יי כִּי אֲמִילָם.
דַּחֲהֵה דַחֲהֵה נִי לְנַפְלִי, וַיַּעֲזְרֵנִי. עֲזַרְתִּי וְזָמַרְתָּ יְהוָה, וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. קוֹל רִנָּה וִישׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלִי צַדִּיקִים, יִמִּין יי
עֲשֶׂה חַיִּל. יִמִּין יי רֹמְמָה, יִמִּין יי עֲשֶׂה חַיִּל. לֹא אָמוֹת כִּי אֶחְיֶה, וְאֶסְפֹּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה. יִסְרֹר נִי יְהוָה,
וְלַמַּוֹת לֹא אֶנְתָּן נִי. פִּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעַר צִדִּיק, אֲבֹא בָם אוֹדֶה יְהוָה. זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לַיְיָ, צַדִּיקִים יִבְאוּ בוֹ.

*Min hameitzar karati yah, anani vamerchav yah. Adonai li lo ira, mah ya-aseh li adam. Adonai li
b'oz'ray, va-ani ereh v'son'ay. Tov lachasot b'Adonai, mib'toach ba-adam. Tov lachasot b'Adonai,
mib'toach bindivim. Kol goyim s'avavuni, b'sheim Adonai ki amilam. Sabuni gam s'avavuni, b'sheim
Adonai ki amilam. Sabuni chidvorim do-achu k'eish kotzim, b'sheim Adonai ki amilam. Dachoh
d'chitani linpol, v'Adonai azarani. Ozi v'zimrat yah, vay'hi li lishuah. Kol rinah vishuah b'aholei
tzadikim, y'min Adonai osah chayil. Y'min Adonai romeimah, y'min Adonai osah chayil. Lo amut
ki echyeh, va-asapeir ma-asei yah. Yasor yis'rani yah, v'lamavet lo n'tanani. Pitchu li sha-arei
tzedek, avo vam odeh yah. Zeh hashar l'Adonai, tzadikim yavo-u vo.*

From the straits I called upon G-d; G-d answered me by placing me in a great expanse. G-d is with me; I have no fear of what man can do to me.

G-d is with me among my helpers; I shall see the defeat of my foes.

It is better to seek refuge in G-d than to trust in man.

It is better to seek refuge in G-d than to trust in princes.

All nations have encompassed me; but in the name of G-d, I routed them.

They swarmed around me; but in the name of G-d, I cut them down.

They swarmed like bees about me, but they were extinguished like a fire of thorns; but in the name of G-d, I cut them down.

You pushed me that I might fall, but G-d helped me.

G-d is my strength and song; G-d has become my salvation.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is heard in the tents of the righteous:

"The right hand of G-d does valiantly.

G-d's right hand is raised in triumph;

G-d's right hand does valiantly!"

I shall not die, but live to relate the deeds of G-d.

G-d has surely punished me, but he has not left me to die.

Open for me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter and praise G-d.

This is the gate of G-d; the righteous may enter through it.

אוֹדֶה כִּי עֲנִיתָ נִי, וְתִהְיֶה לִי לִישׁוּעָה.

אוֹדֶה כִּי עֲנִיתָ נִי, וְתִהְיֶה לִי לִישׁוּעָה.

אֲבֹן מֵאֶסוּ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיתָה לִּי אֵשׁ פְּנֵיהָ.

אֲבָן מִאֲסוּ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה.
מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיְתָה זֶאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֵת בְּעֵינֵינוּ:
מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיְתָה זֶאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֵת בְּעֵינֵינוּ.
זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְיָ, נִגְיָלָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בּוֹ.
זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְיָ, נִגְיָלָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בּוֹ.

Od'cha ki anitani, vat'hi li lishuah.

Od'cha ki anitani, vat'hi li lishuah.

Even ma-asu habonim, hay'tah l'rosh pinah.

Even ma-asu habonim, hay'tah l'rosh pinah.

Mei-eit Adonai hay'tah zot, hi niflat b'eineinu.

Mei-eit Adonai hay'tah zot, hi niflat b'eineinu.

Zeh hayom asah Adonai, nagilah v'nism'chah vo.

Zeh hayom asah Adonai, nagilah v'nism'chah vo.

I thank you for you have answered me, becoming my salvation.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the major cornerstone.

This G-d's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day which G-d has made; We will be glad and rejoice on it.

אֲבָא יְיָ הַיּוֹם יֵעָרָא:
אֲבָא יְיָ הַיּוֹם יֵעָרָא:
אֲבָא יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָא:
אֲבָא יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָא:

Ana Adonai hoshi-ah na.

Ana Adonai hoshi-ah na.

Ana Adonai hatzlichah na.

Ana Adonai hatzlichah na

O Lord, please save us!

O Lord, please save us!

O Lord, let us prosper!

O Lord, let us prosper!

בְּרוּךְ הֵבֵא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ, בְּרִכְנוּכֶם מִבַּיִת יְיָ.
אֵל יְיָ וַיֵּאָרָא לָנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעִבְרֵיתִים עַד קִרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.
אֵלֵי אֲתָהּ וְאוֹדֶךָ, אֵלֵי הִיא אֲרוּמָמְךָ.
הוֹדוּ לִי כִי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד:

Baruch haba b'sheim Adonai, beirachnuchem mibeit Adonai.

Eil Adonai vaya-er lanu, isru chag ba-avotim ad karnot hamizbei-ach.

Eili atah v'odeka, elohai arom'meka.

Hodu l'Adonai ki tov, ki l'olam chasdo.

Blessed be he who comes in the name of G-d;

We bless you from the house of G-d.

G-d is G-d who has shown us light;

Bind the sacrifice with cords, up to the altar-horns.

You are my G-d, and I thank you;

You are my G-d, and I exalt you.

Give thanks to G-d, for he is good;

His kindness endures forever.

Psalms 136

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: הוֹדוּ לַאלֹהֵי הַאֲלֹהִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: הוֹדוּ לַאֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנָיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת לְבָדוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לַעֲשֵׂה הַשְׁמָיִם בַּתְּבוּנָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לְרוֹקַע הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדוֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: אֶת הַשָּׁמַשׁ לְמַמְשֵׁלֵת בַּיּוֹם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: אֶת הַיָּרֵחַ וְכּוֹכְבֵי הַלַּיְלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לְמַכֶּה מִצְרַיִם בְּכּוֹרֵיהֶם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וַיּוֹצֵא יֵשׁׁרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לַגְזֵר יַם סוּף לַגְזָרִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וְהַעֲבִיר יֵשׁׁרָאֵל בְּתוֹכוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וַנַּעַר פְּרָעֹה וְחִילוֹ בַיָּם סוּף, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לְמוֹלִיךְ עִמּוֹ בַּדָּבָר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לְמַכֶּה מַלְכִים גְּדוֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וַיַּהַרְגֵם מַלְכִים אֲדִירִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: לְסִיחוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וּלְעוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וַנִּתֵּן אֶרְצָם לְנַחֲלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וַנַּחֲלֵה לְיֵשׁׁרָאֵל עֲבָדוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: שָׁבַשׁ פְּלִגֵּז, זָכַר לְנוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וַיִּפְרַקְנוּ מִצְרַיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: נוֹתַן לְחָם לְכָל בֶּשָׂר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: הוֹדוּ לַאלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד:

Give thanks to G-d, for he is good,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
Give thanks to the G-d above G-ds,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
Give thanks to G-d of lords,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
To G-d who alone does great wonders,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
To G-d who made the heavens with understanding,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
To G-d who stretched the earth over the waters,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
To G-d who made the great lights,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
The sun to reign by day,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
The moon and the stars to reign by night,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
To G-d who smote Egypt in their firstborn,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
And took Israel out from among them,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
With strong hand and outstretched arm,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
To G-d who parted the Red Sea,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
And caused Israel to pass through it,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
And threw Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
To G-d who led G-d's people through the wilderness,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
To G-d who smote great kings,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
And slew mighty kings,
G-d's kindness endures forever;
Sihon, king of the Amorites,

G-d's kindness endures forever;
 And Og, king of Bashan,
 G-d's kindness endures forever;
 And gave their land as an inheritance,
 G-d's kindness endures forever;
 An inheritance to Israel G-d's servant,
 G-d's kindness endures forever;
 Who remembered us in our low state,
 G-d's kindness endures forever;
 And released us from our foes,
 G-d's kindness endures forever;
 Who gives food to all creatures,
 G-d's kindness endures forever;
 Give thanks to G-d of all heaven,
 G-d's kindness endures forever.

Nishmat

נִשְׁמַת כָּל חַי, תִּבְרַךְ אֶת שֵׁם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְרוּחַ כָּל בֶּשָׂר, תִּפְאֵר וְתִרְוַם זְכָרְךָ מֶלֶךְנוּ, תִּתֵּן מִיד, מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אֶת הָאֵל. וּמִבְּלִעְדֵיךָ אֵין לָנוּ מִלֶּךְ גּוֹאֵל וּמוֹשֵׁי, יַעֲרֹךְ וּמַצִּיל וּמְפָרֵס וּמְרַחֵם, בְּכָל עֵת צָרָה וְצוּקָה. אֵין לָנוּ מִלֶּךְ אֱלֹהֵי אֶתְהוּ: אֱלֹהֵי הַרְאֻשׁוֹנִים וְהָאַחֲרוֹנִים, אֱלֹהֵי כָל בְּרִיּוֹת, אֲדוֹן כָּל תּוֹלְדוֹת, הַמְהַלֵּל בְּרַב הַתְשֵׁב־חַוֹת, הַמְנַהֵג עוֹלָמוֹ בְּחֶסֶד, וּבְרִיּוֹתָיו בְּרַחֲמִים. וַיֵּלֵךְ לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן, הַמְעוֹרָר יְשׁוּבִים וְהַמְקִיץ נִרְדָּמִים, וְהַמְשֵׁיחַ אֶל מֵיִם, וְהַמְתִּיר אֲסוּרִים, וְהַסּוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְהַזּוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים, לֶךְ לְבַדְךָ אֲנִי חָנוּ מוֹדִים. אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵלֵךְ שֵׁיכָה כִּי־נִשָּׁן, וְלִשְׁוֹןנוּ רַבָּה כִּי־הִמּוֹן גָּלוּנוּ, וְשִׁפְתוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבַח כִּי־מְרַחֵם רַק, יַעֲרֹךְ וְעֵינֵינוּ מְאִירוֹת כִּי־שֶׁמֶשׁ וְכִי־חַוִּי, וַיִּדְּנוּ פְרוֹשׁוֹת כִּי־נִשְׁרִי שֶׁמֵיִם, וְרַגְלֵינוּ קָלוֹת כִּי־אֵי־לוֹת, אֵין אֲנִי חָנוּ מִסֵּפֵי יְקִים, לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וּלְבָרֶךְ אֶת שֵׁמֶךָ עַל אַחַת מֵאֲלֵף אֲלֵף אֲלֵפֵי אֲלֵפִים וְרַב־י רַבּוֹת פְּעִמִּים, הַטּוֹבוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְעִמָּנוּ. מִמֶּצְרַיִם גָּאֲלֵתָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וּמִבְּיַת עַבְדִּים פָּדִיתָנוּ, בְּרַעַב זָנִיתָנוּ, וּבִשְׂבַע כִּי־לָכְתָּנוּ, מִחַרְבַּת הַצִּלְתָּנוּ, וּמִדְּבַר מַלְטָתָנוּ, וּמִחַלְלִים רָעִים וּנְאֻמָּנִים דָּלִיתָנוּ: עַד הַנְּהַיְנוּ עֲזָרוֹנוּ רַחֵם יְיָ, וְלֹא עֲזָבוֹנוּ חֶסֶדְךָ וְאֵלֵינוּ שֶׁנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְנֶצַח. עַל כֵּן אֲבָרִים שֶׁפִּלְגָתָנוּ בְּנוֹ, וְרוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁנִּפְחָתָנוּ בְּאִפֵּינוּ, וְלִשְׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר שִׁמְתָנוּ בְּפִינוּ, הֵן הֵם יוֹדוּ וְיִבְרְכוּ וְיִשְׁבַּח חוֹ וּפְאָרוֹ וְיִרְוַמּוּ וְיַעֲרֹךְ יִצְוֹ וְיִקְדֹּשׁ יִשׁוּ וְיִמְלִיכוּ אֶת שֵׁמֶךָ מֶלֶךְנוּ, כִּי־כָל־פֶּה לָךְ יוֹדֶה, וְכָל־לִשׁוֹן לָךְ תִּשְׁבַּח, וְכָל־בֶּרֶךְ לָךְ תִּכְרַע, וְכָל־קוֹמָה לִפְנֵיךָ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, וְכָל־לְבָבוֹת יִירְאוּךָ, וְכָל־קֶרֶב וְכָל־יָד וְכָל־זֶמְרוֹ לְשֵׁמֶךָ. כִּי־דָבָר שֶׁכָּתוּב, כָּל־עֲצָמוֹתַי תִּאֲמַרְנָה יְיָ מִי־כְמוֹךָ. מִצִּיל עֵינֵי מַחְזֵק מִמֶּנּוּ, וְעֵינֵי וְאֲבִיוֹן מִגְּזֵלוֹ: מִי־יִדְמָה לָךְ, וּמִי־יִשְׁוֶה לָךְ וּמִי־יַעֲרֹךְ לָךְ: הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגּוֹרֵם הַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן קִנְיָה שֶׁמֵיִם וְאֶרֶץ: נִהַל לָךְ וְנִשְׁבַּחְךָ וּפְאָרְךָ וּבְרַכְךָ אֶת־שֵׁם קִדְשְׁךָ. כִּי־אֲמֹר, לְדָוִד, בְּרַכִּי נִפְשִׁי אֶת יְיָ, וְכָל־קֶרְבִי אֶת־שֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ:

The soul of every living being shall bless your name, Lord our G-d; the spirit of all flesh shall ever glorify and exalt you our Creator. Throughout eternity you are G-d. Besides you we have no Creator who redeems and saves, ransoms and rescues, sustains and shows mercy in all times of trouble and distress. We have no Creator but you - G-d of the first and of the last, G-d of all creatures, Master of all generations. G-d is one G-d, acclaimed with a multitude of praises, who guides G-d's world with kindness and G-d's creatures with mercy. G-d neither slumbers nor sleeps; he rouses those who sleep and wakens those who slumber; he enables the speechless to speak and loosens the bonds of the captives; he supports those who are fallen and raises those who are bowed down. To you alone we give thanks.

Were our mouth filled with song as the ocean, and our tongue with joy as the endless waves;
 were our lips full of praise as the wide heavens, and our eyes shining like the sun or the moon;
 were our hands spread out in prayer as the eagles of the sky and our feet running as swiftly as

the deer--we should still be unable to thank you and bless your name, G-d, the G-d of our ancestors, for one of the thousands and even myriads of favors which you have bestowed on our ancestors and on us. You have liberated us from Egypt, G-d, and redeemed us from the house of slavery. You have fed us in famine and sustained us with plenty. you have saved us from the sword, helped us to escape the plague, and spared us from severe and enduring diseases. Until now your mercy has helped us, and your kindness has not forsaken us; may you, G-d, never abandon us.

Therefore, the limbs which you have given us, the spirit and soul which you have breathed into our nostrils, and the tongue which you have placed in our mouth, shall all thank and bless, praise and glorify, exalt and revere, sanctify and acclaim your name, our Creator. To you, every mouth shall offer thanks; every tongue shall vow allegiance; every knee shall bend, and all who stand erect shall bow. All hearts shall revere you, and our inner beings shall sing to your name, as it is written: "All my bones shall say: Who is like G-d? You save the weak from one that is stronger, the poor and needy from one who would rob him." Who may be likened to you? Who is equal to you? Who can be compared to you? Our great, mighty and revered G-d is the Creator of heaven and earth. Let us praise, acclaim and glorify you and bless your holy name, as it is said: "A Psalm of David: Bless G-d, my soul, and let my whole inner being bless G-d's holy name."

הָאֵל בְּתַעֲצֻמוֹת עֲזָרְךָ, הַגְדוֹל בְּכַבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ. הַגְּבוּר לְנֹצַח וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּנוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ. הֵמָּלְךְ הַיּוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רָם וְנֹשֵׂא:

O G-d in your mighty acts of power, great in the honor of your name, powerful forever and revered for your awe-inspiring acts, our sovereign, seated upon a high and lofty throne!

שׁוֹכֵן עַד, מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ: וְכָתוּב, רַנְנוּ צִדִּיקִים בַּיְיָ, לֵישָׁרִים נְאֻה תְהִלָּה.

G-d who abides forever, exalted and holy is G-d's name. And it is written: "Rejoice in G-d, you righteous; it is pleasant for the upright to give praise."

בְּפִי יֹשְׁרִים תְהִלָּל. וּבִדְבָרֵי צִדִּיקִים תִּתְבָּרַךְ. וּבְלִשׁוֹן חֲסִידִים תִּתְרוֹמֵם. וּבִקְרֹב קְדוֹשֵׁי יָם תִּתְקַדֵּשׁ:
By the mouth of the upright you shall be praised; By the words of the righteous you shall be blessed; by the tongue of the pious you shall be exalted; in the midst of the holy you shall be sanctified.

וּבִמְקוֹהֵלוֹת רַבּוֹת עִמָּךְ בַּיִת יֵשׁ רְאֵל, בְּרִנָּה יִתְפָּאֵר שְׁמֶךָ מְלֶכֶּנוּ, בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר, שְׁכַן חוֹבֹת כָּל הַיְצוּרִים, לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֵלֵינוּ, וְאֵלֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, לְהוֹדוֹת לְהֵלֵל לְשַׁבַּח לְפָאֵר לְרוֹמֵם לְהַדְרִי לְבָרֵךְ לְעַלֵּה וּלְקַלֵּס, עַל כָּל דְּבָרֵי שִׁירוֹת וְתַשְׁבַּח חוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן יִשָׁי עַבְדְּךָ מֶשֶׁי יִהְיֶה:

In the assemblies of the multitudes of your people, the house of Israel, with song shall your name, our Creator, be glorified in every generation. For it is the duty of all creatures to thank, praise, laud, extol, exalt, adore, and bless you ; even beyond the songs and praises of David the son of Jesse, your anointed servant.

יֵשׁ תִּתְבַּח שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד מְלֶכֶּנוּ, הָאֵל הֵמָּלְךְ הַגְּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּשֵׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ. כִּי לְךָ נְאֻה, יְיָ אֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ: שִׁיר וְשִׁבְחָה, הֵלֵל וְזִמְרָה, עֲזָרָה וּמִשְׁלָה, נֹצַח, גְּדוֹלָה וּגְבוּרָה, תְהִלָּה וְתִפְאֵרָה, קְדוּשָׁה וּמְלִכוּת. בְּרִכּוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

Praise be your name forever, our Creator, who rules and is great and holy in heaven and on earth; for to you, Lord our G-d, it is fitting to render song and praise, hallel and psalms, power and dominion, victory, glory and might, praise and beauty, holiness and sovereignty, blessings and thanks, from now and forever.

יהללוך יי אלהינו כל מעשיך, וחסידך צדיקים עושי רצונך, וכל עמך בית ישראל ברנה יודו ויברכו וישבחו ויפארו וירוממו ויערצו ויקדשו וימלאו את שמך מלכנו, כי לך טוב להודות ולשבחך נאה לזמרה, כי מעולם ועד עולם אתה אל. ברוך אתה יי, מלך מהלל בת שבחות.

All your works praise you, Lord our G-d; your pious followers who perform your will, and all your people the house of Israel, praise, thank, bless, glorify, extol, exalt, revere, sanctify, and coronate your name, our Creator. To you it is fitting to give thanks, and unto your name it is proper to sing praises, for you are G-d eternal.

כוס רביעי - Kos R'Vee-Ee

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, al hagefen v'al p'ri hagafen.

Praised are you, G-d, our G-d, Creator of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן ועל תנובת השדה, ועל ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה, שרצית והנחת לת לאבותינו, לאכול מפריה ולשבוע מטובה. רחם נא יי אלהינו על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל ציון משכן כבודך, ועל מזבח חר ועל היכלך. ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו, והעל נולתוֹכה, ושמן חנונו בבנינה ונאכל מפריה ונשבוע מטובה, ונברכך עליה בקדשה ובטהרה [בשבת ורצה והחליצנו ביום השבת הזה]. ושמן חנונו ביום חג המצות הזה. כי אתה יי טוב ומטיב לכל, ונודה לך על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן. ברוך אתה יי, על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, al hagefen v'al p'ri hagafen. V'al t'nuvat hasadeh, v'al eretz chemdah tovah ur'chavah, sheratzita v'hinchalta la-avoteinu, le-echol mipiryah v'lisboa mituvah. Rachem na, Adonai Eloheinu, al yisra-eil amecha, v'al y'rushalayim irecha, v'al tzion mishkan k'vodecha, v'al mizb'checha, v'al heicholecha. Uv'neih y'rushalayim ir hakodesh bimheirah v'yameinu, v'ha-aleinu l'tochah, v'sam'cheinu b'vinyanah, v'nochol mipiryah v'nisba mituvah, un'varechcha aleha bikdushah uv'tahorah. [ur'tzeih v'hachalitzeinu b'yom hashabat hazeh.] V'sam'cheinu b'yom chag hamatzot hazeh. Ki atah Adonai tov umeitiv lakol, v'nodedh l'cha al ha-aretz v'al p'ri hagafen. Baruch atah Adonai, al ha-aretz v'al p'ri hagafen.

Praised are you, G-d, Creator of the universe, for the vine and its fruit, and for the produce of the field, for the beautiful and spacious land which you gave to our ancestors as a heritage to eat of its fruit and to enjoy its goodness. Have mercy, G-d our G-d, on Israel your people, on Jerusalem your city. Rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, speedily in our days. Bring us there and cheer us with its restoration; may we eat there Israel's produce and enjoy its goodness; we praise you for Jerusalem's centrality in our lives. [On the Sabbath add: Favor us and strengthen us on this Sabbath day] and grant us happiness on this Feast of Matzot; For you, G-d are good and beneficent to all, and we thank you for the land and the fruit of the vine. Praised are you, G-d, for the land and the fruit of the vine.

נרצה/Hasal Seder - Nirtzah

At the conclusion of the seder, we all state, "Next year in Jerusalem!" Obviously, Jews have a special relationship to Israel and especially, to Jerusalem. The Hebrew name for Israel, Ha-Aretz, means simply, "The Land." Since ancient times, Jews have considered their relationship with the land of Israel to entail special responsibilities to the land. Reciting, "Next year in Jerusalem" can be troublesome for contemporary, progressive, and liberal Jews, who have no desire to leave

their diasporah homes or to see the beginning of a messianic era, with all the political and religious implications that would have.

Traditionally, Jerusalem has been the focus of longing for Diaspora Jews who were forced from their land and the Temple of their G-d. Psalm 137 is the well-known lament of the Babylonian Jews who wept "by the rivers of Babylon" and declared, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither." Yet with Israel a modern state, some see that longing as anachronistic, and with it the phrase that traditionally ends the seder, "Next Year in Jerusalem." The temple was destroyed 2,000 years ago, and many Jews today feel comfortable, religiously and materially, in their Diaspora communities. Some are uncomfortable with the extremes of religious life and the ongoing political strife in the Jewish state. The issue is even more salient for Israeli Jews, residents of a country whose capital is Jerusalem, for whom "next year in Jerusalem" therefore makes little sense on its surface.

What, then, does it mean for today's Jew to utter the words "next year in Jerusalem" at the end of every Passover seder?...

For Diaspora Jews who find it difficult to authentically recite this phrase at the end of the seder, the opening words, "next year," offer another entry point. The uttering of "next year in Jerusalem" is a way of expressing solidarity with *Klal Yisrael*, the entire Jewish community, past, present and future. "Next year" encapsulates that continuing flicker of hope that has sustained Jews for centuries past in the midst of despair. It also offers hope that the Israeli nation of today will find peace and that Jerusalem will remain a potential future haven for Diaspora Jews who still live under political and economic oppression.

But our phrase also offers a more majestic sense of hope. The words "next year" suggest a sense of being on the cusp but not yet having arrived, of possibility that is ripe and alive with implication. Rabbi David Hartman, in *The Leader's Guide to the Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night*, sees a "radical futurism" reflected in the phrase, with its intimation of messianic possibility. He sees both the miracles of creation and the exodus from Egypt as pointing to the potential for revolutionary change--that things don't have to be the way they are, that oppressive regimes can change.

Every year, he writes, Jews drink four cups of wine and then pour a fifth for Elijah. "The cup is poured, but not yet drunk. Yet the cup of hope is poured every year. Passover is the night for reckless dreams; for visions about what a human being can be, what society can be, what people can be, what history may become. That is the significance of '*Le-shanah ha-ba-a b'Yerushalayim*' (Next year in Jerusalem)."

--from "Next Year in Jerusalem: Understanding the Familiar Phrase in Light of Modern Realities," by Michele Alperin, for *myjewishlearning.com*, accessed March 31, 2010

Jews living in the diasporah naturally have a very different relationship with Israel than those living in the country itself. If we can apply the concept of "radical change" to our relationship with the earth, perhaps the words, "Next year in Jerusalem" can take on an environmental meaning, and become an ecological challenge. Perhaps we Jews living outside The Land can relate our special covenant with Israel to all the holy land, that is, the planet Earth.

What would such a relationship look like? If we plan to apply the mitzvot of Eretz Yisrael to the Planet Earth, it would create a single human community, and every cubic inch of air, water, and soil would become holy. As we know, holiness can be applied to the everyday, and never was there a commonplace thing more in need of respectful treatment than our earth. Some of the mitzvot that apply to the land include the laws regarding tithes, the rights of the poor to gleanings, and the Sabbatical years. Surely our home could use more tzedakah, compassion, and conservation. Job 5:23 states, “You will have a covenant with the rocks in the field, and the beasts of the earth shall be at peace with you.” The general human concept of the earth as a “resource” for personal and corporate use cannot continue unabated; our relationship with the planet has thus far been “rights” without any associated responsibilities. If we look at the covenant with Israel, we find that the people Israel work to deserve the land; “the Land represents both promise *and* goal; Israel observes the mitzvot in order to merit the Land...” (Bradley Shavit Artson, “Our Covenant with Stones: A Jewish Ecology of Earth,” in *Judaism and Environmental Ethics: A Reader*, Martin Yaffe, ed. p. 163) Judaism has a strong emphasis on sacred time in addition to that of sacred space; because we, as a people, have spent so much time outside our homeland, our tradition includes a sort of portable holiness that can be applied without the Temple or Jerusalem. This portable holiness must now allow us to treat our homes, wherever they may be, as holy space, and this holiness must be reflected in our behaviors toward the Earth.

חֲסֵל סְדֵיִר פֶּסַח כִּהְלַכְתּוּ, כִּכְלֵ מִשְׁפְּטֵי וְחֻקֵּי. כַּאֲשֶׁר זָכַרְנוּ לְסִדְרֵי אֹתוֹ, כִּי נִזְכְּרָה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ. זָךְ שׂוֹכֵן
מְעוֹנָה, קוֹמִים קֹהֵל עֲדַת מִי מָנָה. בְּקָרוֹב נִהַל נִטְעֵי כְנָה, פְּדִיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה.
*Chasal sidur pesach k'hilchato, k'chol mishpato v'chukato. Ka-asher zachinu l'sadeir oto, kein
nizkeh la-asoto. Zach shochein m'onah, komeim k'hal adat mi manah. B'karov naheil nitei
chanah, p'duyim l'tzion b'rinah.*

The Passover Seder is concluded, according to each traditional detail with all its laws and customs. As we have been privileged to celebrate this Seder, so may we one day celebrate it in Jerusalem. Pure One who dwells in the high places, support your People countless in number. May you soon redeem all your People joyfully in Zion.

לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם:
L'Shana HaBa'ah Ba'Y'rushalayim
Next Year in Jerusalem!

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