

Sustaining Our Vision: The Jewish Climate Change Campaign

Generational change for the Jewish people



Document for Alliance of Religions and Conservation Celebration at Windsor Castle. November 2009

Note from the Editors

This is a call to build a movement — to take small actions and as a people make big change.

Climate change is both a global crisis and an immense opportunity. It challenges us to live better and walk more responsibly on the earth. How can we use the wisdom of Jewish teaching and the collective passion and ingenuity of the Jewish people to inspire a vision for the future? What changes can we make to help bring the resources of the Jewish people to bear on this issue?

This document presents a framework for thought and action that seeks to answer these questions.

Many individuals, communities and Jewish institutions believe that they should contribute to the sustainability of the planet and do something about climate change and related ecological problems but find the scale of the challenge overwhelming. Most do not know where to start.

This document aims to present large scale vision, small scale recommendations for action, and a framework for connecting the two.

None of the drafters or signatories to this document has any mandate to speak for the Jewish people. We have no pope or single chief rabbi; we have no Sanhedrin. This document will have value only when it is used by Jewish leaders, institutions, and by individuals. It will have impact in the community only if words lead to action.

This document was prepared by Hazon and Jewish Climate Initiative at the request of The Alliance of Religions and Conservation, ARC. ARC is an umbrella non-profit organization based in the UK that seeks to inspire and mobilize the world's religious communities to create a better world. It was founded on the belief that knowing what to do about the environment is not enough, a profound shift in values and vision to motivate us to act on our knowledge is essential. The values and vision of the world's faiths can shift human behavior through inspiration and guidance.

To mobilize the resources of the world's spiritual traditions ARC, in partnership with the United Nations, has invited each of the world's major religions to write and commit to a seven-year sustainability plan detailing how each religion intends to mobilize its wisdom, resources and members to combat the ecological crisis. The seven-year timescale is a step towards generational change, beyond electoral cycles and short-term political horizons towards the world that we leave our children.

The plans were presented in November 2009 at a celebration at Windsor Castle, England in front of an audience including HRH The Prince Philip and the Secretary General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon. This event precedes the global climate negotiations at the 15th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009. The Copenhagen conference is intended to forge a post-Kyoto global consensus on responding and adapting to climate change. Many view it as a critical point in humanity's efforts to create a livable future on this planet.

We hope that the plan will focus and amplify the diverse energies within the Jewish world that are turning to address this issue.

This document is a call to action, a call to demonstrate that the Jewish people can help light the way to more sustainable living. We are heirs to a tradition that believes that learning and discussion must lead to action. Read. Think about what is written. Disagree. Strengthen what is here – but most of all, act. Be a link in the chain of bringing these words to fruition and of adding the next chapter in the Jewish people's contribution to the world.

Signed,

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Introduction

As a fraction of the global population with one small state, the Jewish people alone are not capable of changing the world. However, the Jewish tradition teaches us to serve as a “light unto the nations,” (Isaiah 43). With this document, we are participating in an alliance of religions to address global sustainability and the existential threat of climate change. We hope thereby that the Jewish people will offer its wisdom, tradition and thought leadership to help light the way for all.

Two things are clear: first, we need to do more than we are doing; second, the path to doing more seems difficult, with the challenges overwhelming and time and money finite.

This document, therefore, sets out broad goals for the next seven years and, a framework to enable any individual, family, institution or community to take steps towards accomplishing those goals. Our vision is large, but the practical steps towards accomplishing it are incremental and achievable. Critically, we emphasize the need to integrate education, action, and advocacy, and the need to work in concentric circles from the few to the many.

Our vision is large, but the practical steps towards accomplishing it are incremental and achievable.

We now call upon the Jewish people – as individuals and families, as institutions, and as a wider community – to take determined steps to live more sustainably, and to act and advocate to create a more sustainable world for all.

Critically, we emphasize the need to integrate education, action, and advocacy and the need to work in concentric circles from the few to the many.

The first step is to focus on generational change. We set goals for time periods that are long enough to allow for real change, yet close enough to the present to warrant action. Jewish tradition is rooted in Jewish time, and has within it a septennial structure called Shmita. The Shmita Year bears within it an important ecological vision of Judaism. During the Shmita Year, as described by the Bible, agricultural work in Israel stops. People eat whatever grows on its own in the fields, and everyone, rich and poor alike (and animals too) may come and take from its produce. Shmita

acknowledges that the Earth is not raw material to be exploited for profit with maximum efficiency but is a gift to be used for the common well-being.

We have chosen to launch a Jewish plan for sustainability and climate change to prepare for the next Shmita cycle, beginning in September 2015.

Goals & Key Resolutions:

We call on the Jewish Community to adopt these goals:

- **To play a distinct and determined role in responding to climate change, and fostering sustainability, between now and September 2015;** both the Diaspora Jewish communities and the state of Israel shall be widely seen – and we shall see ourselves – as being at the forefront of education, action and advocacy responses to the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation.
- **For each Jewish organization, small and large, to create a sustainability committee by September 2010.** The sustainability committee can be a green team, a climate change task force; it can be professional or volunteer.¹
- **To integrate education, action and advocacy in addressing the challenges of climate change and environmental sustainability.**
- **That Israel will be a renewable light unto the nations powered lowered by clean energy sources, and Jerusalem will become a model green city.**

¹ This document contains some information on initial steps and a framework for progress.

The Pledge

- YES:** I believe that the Jewish People can and should play a distinct role in responding to climate change and fostering sustainability between now and September 2015 (the end of the next 7-year sabbatical cycle in the Jewish calendar);
- YES:** I call on all Jewish organizations, small and large, to create Green Teams that will draw up seven-year goals to affect change and specific steps to get started this year;
- YES:** I believe we must integrate *education, action and advocacy*. So I commit every month to *learn* more about the environment and about Jewish teachings on sustainability; to *act* by making more sustainable choices; and to *advocate* for generational change by speaking up to friends, family members, colleagues and opinion-leaders;
- YES:** I'll write my elected representatives: "I ask you and our government to build a more sustainable global economy; to support the creation of green jobs; to prioritize protecting vulnerable populations; and to ensure that the UN Climate Change Conference creates the strongest possible framework to ameliorate climate change."
- YES:** I hope 600,000² Jewish people join me in signing this pledge. Please add my name to the list.

The campaign has grown through the high holidays, with a public launch on the eve of the Climate Action Day, and the reading of the Torah portion of Noah.

By the start of the Windsor Celebration, over 1,000 people had signed the pledge at JewishClimateCampaign.org and over 1000 more had joined the movement on Facebook (facebook.com/JewishClimateCampaign).

By the time of the Copenhagen Conference we hope to have galvanized worldwide support. Jewish institutions will then be able to utilize this energy to integrate environmental education, action and advocacy over the following years.

By September 2015, six years from now (at the end of the next sabbatical year in the Jewish calendar), Jewish communities worldwide will have integrated sustainability into the fabric of all that they do.

² Why 600,000? It's a large number and in Jewish tradition there's a special blessing if 600,000 people come together. Most important is that this be a really large number of people – to make clear to Jewish leaders and the wider world that Jewish people care strongly about these issues.

The State of Israel

As a sovereign nation, Israel makes decisions that have far-reaching ecological consequences. Israel has been described as the “National Jewish People Project.” It is a locus of pride, concern and identity for Jews around the world. As a small country rich in sunlight, it could rapidly become a world leader and flagship in solar energy portfolio standards and in building solar powered auto fleet. Turning Israel into the first nation predominantly powered by renewable energy should be a leading goal for the Jewish people world wide. Although we recognize that the motives and mechanisms driving environmental activism in Israel are different from those at work in the Diaspora, a commitment to the unity of Jewish people hood leads us to make Israel an integral part of this plan.

Accordingly, we call for Israeli government policies that will advance sustainability. These are largely based on the recommendations of the “Paths to Sustainability” research group of the “Life and Environment” coalition of Israeli environmental organizations. In addition, we set out ways in which Jews outside Israel can support the Israeli environmental movement and also the country’s dynamic clean technology sector.

Framework for the Future: 3x3

In order to accomplish the goals established above and to address global issues through individual actions and break a huge task into manageable work, here is a framework for planning and reaching the vision of sustainability and addressing the issue of climate change:

The Participants in Israel and the World: Individuals, Institutions and Community

The framework needs to address all of the different parts of the community – from the individual and their home to the largest regional communities.

Jewish institutions like schools, synagogues, camps, community centers are part of the framework, too. Each one of these is a participant in the movement and each one has different goals and actions over the coming years. These participants function within Israel and the Diaspora communities.



The Effort: Education, Action and Advocacy

Participants in the movement can categorize their effort as Education, Action or Advocacy. The three have a cyclical relationship: education on the pressing environmental issues, the science behind them, and Jewish Values leads to action to improve conditions, which leads to advocacy for policies that support sustainability. But the cycle does not stop there: There is always more to learn, more to teach, more to do and more to ask for.

This Framework reflects a Jewish sensibility. According to the Talmud, “Great is study, because study leads to action.” (Kiddushin, 40b). Action is grounded in, and inspired by education. In the context of sustainability and climate change, action must have two parts; first, small scale changes in behavior and policy within our homes, communities and institutions; second, advocacy; speaking out publicly to persuade our leaders to take the large-scale steps necessary to make society sustainable.

We invite communities to take upon themselves a commitment to work in all 9 boxes – starting with a topic that interests them. This is an iterative process. As a community, we can make progress in all nine boxes before September 2015 if everyone follows their passion and works in the boxes that interest them on the topics that are important to them.

	Education	Action	Advocacy
Individual & Family			
Institution: Synagogue, Community Center, School or other			
Greater Community			

Framework for the Future: 3x3

Where to Begin: Taking the First Step

The framework exists so that everyone can follow their passion, work from a place of hope and inspiration and work towards a common vision of sustainability. To begin, identify a participant: a home, institution or community.

1. Identify the Passion

- Where are the passions? What topics are particularly relevant to you and your community? Appendix 4 contains a list of general environmental topics.
- Who are the people? Find other people who feel the same way or who you think could feel the same passion with the help of additional environmental and Jewish education.

2. Measure

- Measure the current state: for water and energy, use past bills to identify usage patterns, take photos, survey local periodicals; walk around the home, facility or community and document the situation that you are starting with. Measurement will allow you to demonstrate progress.

3. Educate, Act, Advocate

- Passion will point you towards a topic. Measurement will identify the opportunities for improvement. Use the 3x3 frameworks to identify what to do. This is an iterative process, spiral through the grid to broaden and deepen the impact. A list of actions is continuously updated at jewishclimatecampaign.org/3x3.php.



4. Start Again

- Return to examining the passions and topics of interests, which may have evolved through the process of education, action and advocacy of other topics.
- An examples for food is included in Appendix 3, and many more examples are at jewishclimatechange.org/3x3.php

Guiding Principles

This plan is guided by the experiences of the Jewish community and the Jewish environmental sector.³ We recommend that Jewish leaders – professionals and lay leaders, religious and secular – keep these principals in mind to guide the implementation of the plan.

Plain language and clear thought best describe the vision.

Significant change is possible. It must be based on an honest assessment of our strengths and weaknesses. So think clearly and write plainly about what is possible and what can be done.

Significant change is possible.

The religious imperative for environmentalism should be rooted in central tenets of Jewish tradition.

The Jewish conversation on the environment should focus on the connection of central concepts of Judaism, like Halakha⁴ and Shabbat⁵, to the Earth and environmental sustainability in addition to some of the practices that were historically more marginal to Jewish life like bal tashchit⁶ and tu b'shvat⁷. This dual-strategy can broaden the popular appeal of the concepts and assure resonance across diverse people. We need to recover and restore the knowledge of how core Jewish beliefs and practices teach us to live in harmonious interconnectedness with the physical world. The tenets are discussed in detail in the Theology, Tradition and Wisdom section.

Jewish environmentalism should be mainstreamed.

Environmental issues have been detached from the rest of contemporary Jewish life; they need to be reconnected with it. We need to stop thinking about the environment as a separate category and focus on creating a healthier world and in the process strengthen Jewish life, communities and identity. Jewish environmental leaders will accomplish more by seeing themselves as part of a broader community. Mainstream leaders will gain by seeing Jewish environmentalism as part of the solution for how to accomplish their broader goals.

The broader goals and central contemporary concerns of Jewish organizations and leadership can be addressed through sustainability and environmental topics.

Jewish organizations are most focused on fundraising and financing, topics related to Israel, anti-Semitism and Jewish education. Each of these concerns can be addressed through an environmental lens; in fact, sustainability is an opportunity to address each one.

- **On Budgets:** Efficiency is part of sustainability. Greening is both efficient and economic: good for the planet and good for the bottom line. Many green measures present an opportunity to reduce inefficiency, save money, rationalize and avoid duplication – while reducing an organization's impact on the planet.
- **On Israel:** While Israel has been at the center of the Diaspora's educational model, some communities are finding it harder to motivate strong connections with Israel, particularly among youth. Taking active responsibility for conservation and environmental protection in Israel can be a powerful alternative model for inspiring a relationship to Israel particularly among youth.

³ Founding partners include: Hazon, Teva, Jewish Farm School, Eden Village, Green Zionist Alliance, Shalom Center, Jewish Greening Fellowship, Adamah, Kayam, Canfei Nesharim, Jewish Climate Initiative, Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership, Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, Teva Ivri, Yisrael Bishvil Ofanayim, Sviva Israel. A current list is available at jewishclimatechange.org/partners.php

⁴ Halakha – The system of guidelines which defines traditional Jewish behavior

⁵ Shabbat – The Jewish day of rest, traditionally observed on the seventh day of the week.

⁶ Bal Taschit – The prohibition against wasteful consumption

⁷ Tu B'Shvat – The New Year of the Trees, observed on the fifteenth day of the month of Shevat

Guiding Principles

- **On Anti-Semitism:** With many Jewish communities feeling increasingly nervous about anti-Semitism, environmental issues provide an opportunity to build partnerships with other faith-based and minority communities around shared interests and values.
- **On Jewish Education:** Environmental education provides opportunities to Jewish education:
 - It makes available and relevant a range of existing Jewish education resources.
 - It inspires a connection to Judaism through an issue that people already care about.
 - It inducts and integrates ecologically conscious Jews into Jewish institutions.
 - It creates diverse leadership opportunities in the Jewish community.
 - It enlivens Jewish practice and spirituality through a stronger connection to creation.
 - It enriches Jewish education through classic environmental education methodologies that are experiential and informal.

Resources for Generational Change

The Alliance for Religions and Conservation proposed seven key areas of common ground for the different faiths' approaches to addressing generational change:

- Theology, Wisdom, Thought Leadership
- Education
- Lifestyles
- Celebration
- Buildings/ Use of Assets
- Policy and Advocacy
- Partnerships

The remainder of this document addresses each of these areas by presenting what the Jewish faith has to offer, what is going on in the community today, a long term vision, and the seven-year goals to achieve that vision.

These sections are based on the inputs of the community through the website: JewishClimateCampaign.org. Contributors ranged from leaders of Jewish Environmental organizations to citizens interested in lending a voice.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

What We Have: Jewish Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

In the multi-faceted Jewish world, there are diverse understandings of Jewish theology, law and practice. The task of articulating a Jewish environmental ethic that speaks across denominational differences is therefore challenging. It requires drawing upon commitments and vocabulary that are shared by as many contemporary Jews as possible.

We define four categories of environmental resources in the Jewish tradition.

- Theology
- Central practices – everyday practice that should either be seen in a new light or remembered in its original context
- Traditional Practices that directly address our relationship to the natural world
- General Jewish Values that support sustainability

■ Theology

The first two chapters of Genesis, arguably the most central and well-known of Jewish texts, teach a creation theology that provides a strong grounding for environmental responsibility. We learn there that, according to the Torah, Creation is good and reflects the plan of a Divine consciousness, diversity in creation is to be cherished, and human beings are charged with the responsibility of actively maintaining and conserving life on earth.

These chapters of Genesis have been frequently cited by writers on Jewish ecology to show that we are God's caretakers for the earth. Our job is to cultivate the natural world and enhance its capacity to support life. God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden "to work it and conserve it." (Genesis 2:15.)

See how beautiful and praiseworthy are all of my works... Do not corrupt the world; for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to set it right after you.

An often-quoted midrash says: When God created Adam, God led him around all of the trees in the Garden of Eden. God told him, 'See how beautiful and praiseworthy are all of my works. Everything I have created has been created for your sake. Think of this and do not corrupt the world; for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to set it right after you.' (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13.)

Destroying the conditions on Earth for life as know it violates this duty of stewardship. It is from these beginnings that Judaism has evolved the notion of a religious responsibility for humans to care for creation.

■ Central practices

Some of the central practices of Jewish tradition relate to cherishing and protecting the natural environment. Often they are hidden in plain sight in the daily rituals that define Judaism.

● **Shabbat:**

We need to recover the ecological value of Shabbat as a day to step back from the act of creation: manufacturing, shopping, flying, driving, and technological manipulation. The ability to set limits on human exploitation of the world is a crucial check on environmental destruction which Jewish tradition possesses, and which the global consumer culture generally lacks. For Jews who currently observe Shabbat, their observance can lead to a deeper sense of Shabbat's ecological significance. For Jews who do not currently keep Shabbat in a *halakhic* sense, there is an opportunity to explore aspects of Shabbat observance, as an ecological value.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

For the broader global community, the model of Shabbat is useful in demonstrating how to live – if only for one day a week – without consuming. For example, if every resident in a major city chose one day of the week to refrain from driving, there would be immediate improvement to the city's congestion, local air quality, and carbon emissions.

- **Kashrut:**

We need to recover the ecological value of *kashrut*. Judaism has evolved a detailed system of laws governing what is fit for us to eat. While some of the original reasons for the *kashrut* laws are today opaque, it is clear that part of the motivation was to cause the animals that we eat the minimum of suffering, (see e.g. Maimonides Guide of the Perplexed, Book 3, Chapter 48) and to treat them with a dignity that recognized our interconnectedness with them.

Today, our understanding of *kashrut*- what is fit for Jews to eat should be challenged to expand. The system of food production contributes between 25% and 37% of all United States greenhouse gas emissions. Eating is the one thing we all do that has the most far-reaching, negative ecological consequences.

Kashrut can consider whether produce that is grown at the cost of huge ecological damage, food that travels thousands of miles to reach us, factory farmed animals that are raised in great cruelty are fit to eat. We seek to build upon, paradoxically, also to move beyond the concept of *eco-kashrut* that was coined in the 1970s. "Eco-*kashrut*" suggests that the ecological destructiveness of our food choices is a fringe concern lying outside the purview of mainstream *kashrut* itself. Today we need to question this notion. The often destructive nature of industrial food production challenges both ordinary Jews and *halakhic* decision makers to consider whether and how *kashrut* should take account of these new realities.

- **Berakhot:**

Blessings are the tradition's way of enabling us to express gratitude. The blessings can be understood and practiced as a system of engendering mindfulness towards the gifts of Creation. When someone says a food blessing they pause to consider the origin of the food item to identify whether it grew on a tree, in the ground or in the sea. It is but a small step to extend that moment of awareness to reflecting on the circumstances under which the food was grown, whether in a way that nurtured the earth, or harmed it, whether in a manner that respected the creature that is about to be consumed. In that way, nurturing awareness can lead to change.

- **Shema:**

The *Shema* is the best known of Jewish prayers. It bears profound ecological meanings. The first line is an affirmation of the unity and interconnectedness of all things (Deuteronomy, 6:4). The second paragraph is a statement that if we live well in relation to our natural environment, our surroundings will treat us well and vice versa. (Deuteronomy 11:14-17). Although these passages have particularly Jewish significance, and in an era of global climate change, they clearly have universal ecological lessons to teach as well. These aspects need to be re-emphasized and taught.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

■ Traditional Practices for the Natural World

● **Shmita:**

Shmita (Sabbatical Year) is the practice of letting the land rest one year in every seven. During the *Shmita* Year, as described by the Bible, agricultural work in Israel stops. People eat whatever grows on its own in the fields, and everyone, rich and poor alike (and animals too) may come and take from its produce. *Shmita* acknowledges that the Earth is not raw material to be exploited for profit with maximum efficiency, but is a gift to be used for the common well-being.

In Israel, *Shmita* is practiced (though in an attenuated form) to this day. In the US, *Shmita* Project, a program of Hazon and Jewish Farm School, has begun the work of reapplying *Shmita* in a post-industrial world. The biblical practices of *Shmita* addressed both people's relationship to the land – through not planting – and to each other – through the forgiveness of loans. We should develop new means of honoring both.

● **Bal Tashchit:**

Wasteful misuse of the world's resources. The prohibition is found in Deuteronomy (20:19-20), "When in your war against a city you have to besiege it for a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy (*bal tashchit*) its fruit trees... You may eat of them but you must not destroy the fruit trees." Later Jewish thinkers explained that *bal tashchit* applies to any pointless destruction of resources. We need reconsider and reapply rabbinic sources which teach that consuming more resources than necessary to achieve a particular human purpose may be *bal tashchit*. (E.g. Talmud Shabbat 67a, 140a.)

● **Laws of Neighbors:**

A sophisticated detailed body of Jewish law, *Hilkhot Shekeinim*, laws of neighbors deals with our responsibility for pollution damage that we cause. For example, there is no presumptive right to cause pollution that damages another's health, however long we've been doing it. (Bava Batra 23a) This is relevant to carbon emissions, which the industrialized world has produced for two hundred years without understanding the damage they cause. Today these laws need to be extrapolated from their original local context, in order to provide guidance for our very different, global and interconnected world.

● **Tza'ar Balei Hayim:**

The Torah prohibits inflicting emotional or physical pain on animals. For example, if on your way, you happen upon a bird's nest in a tree or on the ground, with baby birds or eggs in it, do not take the mother with her young. Drive away the mother and take only the young. "This way you will live a long life." (Deuteronomy 22, 6-7). Nachmanides explains that the crime here is that by catching the mother and young together one is taking a step towards the animal's extinction. This Mitzvah is a directive to preserve biodiversity and not to extinguish natural species. At the current rate, up to 30% of the world's species may be extinguished because of climate change.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

■ General Jewish Values that support Sustainability

● **Mitzvah and Halakha:**

The notions of *mitzvah* and *halakha* as self-maintained modes of best behavior are profoundly relevant to the environmental challenge of transforming societal behavioral norms. We have all seen the lists of “50 ways you can help save the planet” by changing personal and domestic behavior. Traditional Jews are intimately familiar with the practice of detailed self-discipline in everyday life. We need to bring this wisdom and discipline to the task of sustainable living.

● **Tzedek, Justice:**

The commandment of *tzedek, tzedek, tirdof*, (Deuteronomy 16:20) pursuing justice, pertains to the environment as well. The poor and vulnerable in the U.S.

and the world over are disproportionately affected by all forms of environmental degradation. Pursuing justice means advancing solutions to global sustainable development.

Pursuing justice means advancing solutions to global sustainable development.

● **Brit, Covenant and Our Children:**

The central Jewish concept of Brit, covenant, teaches that the ethical purpose of one’s life stretches beyond one’s limited existence, both in time and in space. Judaism is a multi-generational project. We lovingly invest in our children. The Talmud teaches, “Whoever teaches their children Torah, it is as if he had taught his children and children’s children until the end of all the generations.” (Kiddushin 30a) We are each a link in a chain that stretches from Sinai to the end of time. It is immoral for us to ruin the world that our children will inherit, for the sake of our current consumption. Furthermore Brit teaches that we are not just individuals. We are interdependent on all levels, and nowhere is that more manifest than in the environment. The notion of an individual prospering alone is distinctly un-Jewish. We need to reassert that our well-being can only be secured collectively.

● **Tikkun Olam:**

Fixing the World, repairing what is broken, has been adopted as a cardinal modern Jewish value. The phrase itself is over 1500 years old, dating back to the “*aleinu*” prayer. Though *Tikkun Olam’s* application to social justice and the environment is relatively recent, it has acquired profound resonance in the contemporary Jewish world.

● **Crisis, Adaptation and Hope:**

Judaism has more than once adapted itself to overcome crises that threatened its very continuation. We need to recognize what Jewish tradition can teach about adaptation in the face of impending ecological crisis. Many times, The Jewish People have stared down destruction and emerged with hope. Regardless of our current situation, hope that we can make the world a better place is a basic Jewish value.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

■ General Jewish Values that support Sustainability

● ***Pikuach Nefesh, Saving life:***

Climate change is a serious threat to human life. Already, climate change has contributed to increased fatalities through droughts and floods. Over the coming century it is projected to threaten the lives of tens of millions. Through the archetypal commandment to build a protective parapet around your house, the Torah commands us to take scrupulous precautions to protect and save human life. (Deuteronomy 22:8)

...The Torah commands us to take scrupulous precautions to protect and save human life.

● ***T'chum Shabbat and New Urbanism:***

Traditional Jewish communities have always been compactly organized. The prohibition against traveling and walking more than 2000 *amot* (about 1000 meters) beyond the city limits on Shabbat makes it essential for observant Jews to live within walking distance of key institutions: school, synagogue, *mikveh* (ritual bath) etc. This is a powerful model for the New Urbanism which seeks to build compact, green, walkable cities to reduce suburban sprawl and emissions from transport.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

Where We Are: What is Going on in The Jewish Community Now

Since the late sixties rabbis, Jewish thinkers and activists have been drawing connections between Jewish teachings and environmentalism. Today there is a plethora of initiatives in the Jewish community exploring and deepening the connection of Jewish tradition to the environment.

In the US, Hazon has expanded its research and teaching on Judaism and the environment through the recent work of its rabbinical scholars, Rabbis Steve Greenberg and Yedidya Sinclair. Canfei Nesharim has produced a stream of high quality articles. JTS and COEJL held an academic seminar on Judaism and the environment in March 2009. Sviva Israel has published four important collections of articles on "Environment in Jewish Thought and Law." Significant books on the subject have been authored by Jeremy Benstein, Ellen Bernstein and Rabbi Arthur Waskow, among others. A book of academic essays appeared in the Harvard Divinity School series on World Religions and Ecology.

In Israel, the past three years have seen a dramatic proliferation of study and research around Judaism and ecology. They include Rabbi Dov Berkovitz's Halichot Olam Bet Midrash, the Eco-Activist Bet Midrash at Simchat Shlomo, Teva Ivri, and Jewish Climate Initiative's work on framing climate change as a Jewish issue.

These projects taken together are significantly expanding Jewish textual and traditional engagement with the environment and sustainability. They are beginning to move Judaism and the environment from being a sub-specialty of Jewish thought into the mainstream. However, much more remains to be done. To the best of our knowledge there is no standing research program in Judaism and the Environment at any leading yeshiva, university or rabbinical school, and the issue has not, so far, engaged the sustained attention of the Jewish people's best philosophical and halakhic minds.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

Vision for the Next Generation: Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

In the second half of the twentieth century, the tumultuous events of the Shoah (Holocaust) and the foundation of the State of Israel triggered an outpouring of Jewish philosophy and theology that aimed to interpret these unprecedented historical eruptions. Thinkers including Rabbis Joseph Soloveitchik, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Eliezer Berkovitz, Yitz Greenberg, David Hartman, Emil Fackenheim and Avivah Zornberg strove to find meaning in these new circumstances from within the matrix of traditional Jewish sources. In the process they helped engender far-reaching transformations in Jewish identity, affiliation and practice.

Today we argue that a similar investment of Jewish intellectual creativity is required to respond to the dramatic and unprecedented circumstances of the twenty first century ecological crisis. Just as late twentieth century Jewish thought helped Jews interpret and respond to the historical upheavals of the Shoah and the creation of Israel, so too, early twenty first century Jewish thought must do the same for our ecological upheavals. Beginning from the valuable resources identified above, the challenge is to evolve a theological and spiritual worldview which will engender a renewal of Jewish practice that responds to the crisis and orients Jews to the contemporary reality.

Our vision for the next generation is that the Jewish people's best thinkers and scholars will lead a large-scale and concerted effort that responds to the ecological crisis by renewing Jewish theology, spirituality and practice and begins to engender significant changes in consciousness and behavioral norms. By 2015, this effort will have helped place the Jewish People at the forefront of the global drive for sustainability.

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom

Theology, Tradition and Wisdom Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

Based on the vision, the goal for 2015 is to move ecological thought to the center of Jewish theology and practice. Specific goals include:

- Founding a Global Center for Jewish Ecological Thought in Jerusalem.
- Establishing several programs in Jewish Ecological Thought at leading rabbinical schools and University Jewish Studies Departments.
- Formulating a renewed theology and halakhic practice of Shmita.
- Formulating a Creation Theology rooted in an ecological perspective.
- Articulating a philosophy of sustainable consumption for Jewish communities that incorporates a vision of our interconnectedness with the world and all its inhabitants.
- Articulating a Jewish theology of climate change responding to the unprecedented circumstances in which human beings are a significant factor affecting the atmosphere.
- Formulating a theology and ethic of global responsibility that accounts for the fact that all of our actions affect everything in the world for better and worse.
- Renewing and recovering the ecological meaning in central Jewish practices. The task, in many cases, is to remember and revitalize the meaning of insights and teachings which have been forgotten or neglected.
- Stimulating scholars and halakhic decision makers to respond to issues of sustainable consumption and waste of natural resources by using and developing the tools of Jewish Law.

Education

What We Have: Jewish Environmental Education

Jewish environmental education can show that Jewish tradition has a **unique** and **authentically Jewish** contribution to make to the public conversation on the environment. This is a powerful argument for the living relevance of Judaism in the contemporary world. For most young Jews, environmental concern is an axiomatic part of responsible citizenship.

Conversely, for Jewish education to ignore or marginalize environmentalism would likely lead to Judaism being ignored and marginalized by a generation of Jews for whom environmental concern is increasingly central to their moral consciousness.

The Jewish educational system ranges from local pre-schools and local synagogues to universities and rabbinical academies. While the system is diverse, there are a few key centralized points of contact that can help to distribute information and shift focus.

Where We Are in Education: What is Going on in The Jewish Community Now

■ **Outdoors, Experiential, Jewish Environmental Education**

Jewish texts are arguably most effective in the context of environmental education if they are taught in a way that engages contemporary issues and if they are combined with some practical change or challenge for the participants.

Highly effective Jewish environmental education in recent years has been done by small organizations that have taken Jewish people outdoors and connected Jewish teaching with action and the natural world.

These programs include:

- Adamah (Isabella Freedman): Jewish Environmental Fellowship is a three-month leadership training program for Jewish young adults in their 20s that integrates organic farming, sustainable living, Jewish learning, community building and contemplative spiritual practice;
- Hazon: Creating a healthier and more sustainable Jewish community and a healthier and more sustainable world for all;
- Jewish Farm School: promotes and practices sustainable agriculture and to support food systems rooted in justice and Jewish traditions;
- Kayam (Pearlstone): facilitates hands-on Jewish and secular agricultural and environmental education;
- Teva Learning Center: immersion of education experiences in natural settings and integrating Jewish environmental education into classrooms and Jewish institutions. Training of educators;
- Derekh Hateva: Jewish Outdoor Education in Israel;

These are diverse organizations with varied programs working with different age groups, and across a fairly wide denominational spread.

What they all share is a hands-on approach. Every one of these programs combines Jewish learning with getting outdoors. There is strong evidence across all of these programs that alumni become more Jewishly involved and more environmentally active.

Education

■ **Training and Support of Jewish Communal Leaders**

Jewish communal professionals who are making the day to day decisions about how Jewish agencies run must be trained and empowered to put meaningful Jewish responses to global climate change high on their list of priorities.

The Jewish Greening Fellowship, a project of the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center generously funded by UJA-Federation of New York, is a new program now being piloted with 20 Jewish community centers and camps in the New York area.

The Jewish Greening Fellowship trains key staff from within 20 Jewish agencies to be leaders of green change in their organizations in the areas of facility, operations and programs. The Jewish Greening Fellows engage in an 18 month training program that highlights core Jewish ecological and social justice values and empowers Fellows to build green teams, partner with other organizations and transform the culture of their agencies toward becoming ecological responsible. In addition, each Jewish Greening Fellowship agency is awarded direct financial incentives towards completing energy audits, implementing sustainable facility upgrades and creating green programmatic initiatives to inspire and educate the larger community. This program can be a model for the kind of training that can happen all over the country and has a capacity for “viral” impact as alumni become trainers. If a Jewish Greening Fellowship were instituted in every region of the United States, each with 20 Fellows, our community would soon benefit from hundreds of Jewish communal professionals with the capacity to champion green change throughout the American Jewish community.

■ **Rabbinic Training**

The task of instilling the centrality of ecological concepts in Judaism begins with the rabbinate. We advocate incorporating an environmental leadership component into rabbinical training across the Jewish denominations, as has recently been pioneered by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia.

This rabbinic training program component should equip rabbis to teach, lead and inspire their communities towards making sustainability central to their mission. It should include in depth study of classical Jewish source that bear on ecology, as well as basic environmental science and policy. Rabbis should be strongly encouraged to engage with and formulate theological and legal positions on environmental issues including environmental justice, e.g. by presenting them with halakhic and public policy questions on issues such as energy efficiency, switching to renewable energy sources and water consumption.

■ **Youth Movements**

Jewish youth movements in the US, Israel and UK play an immensely influential role in instilling Jewish values and identity for generations of teens. Ecological teaching should be incorporated into youth movement-based educational and outdoors activities.

■ **Professional Education**

Jewish Greening Fellowship, as described above, trains Jewish communal professionals who are making the day to day decisions about how Jewish agencies run must be trained and empowered to put meaningful Jewish responses to global climate change high on their list of priorities.

Education

Vision for the Next Generation: Jewish Environmental Education

Environmental awareness and practice will be built into Jewish Studies curricula for all ages and across the Jewish denominations. Curricula will stress the ecological dimension inherent in traditional Jewish practices and will be integrated with everyday school life. Environmental justice will be included in teachings about tikkun olam. The result will be more mainstream Jewish environmental education.

Jewish Environmental Education Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

- Foundations and federations fund environmental education programs on a larger-scale, and synagogues, schools and JCCs partner with them to distribute programs widely.
- Facilitate Shared Resources: Today many people and organizations are working on Jewish environmental curricula, sourcebooks, etc. Canfei Nesharim has done important work in this area, for example, through its book of environmental essays on Parshat Hashavua. To minimize costs and maximize accessibility, a comprehensive, Jewish repository of resources ranging from cutting edge research articles on Eco-theology to Primary School lesson plans is needed.
- Build on the success of existing programs that take Jewish people outdoors and connect Jewish teaching with action;
- Train staff at Jewish agencies to take leadership in making their facilities more energy efficient and their operations more sustainable. Then, build awareness to educate members and constituents on how to become agents of green change and the Jewish values underpinning such leadership.
- Integrate environmental leadership component to all rabbinic and lay leadership programs.
- Include a Jewish environmental education element in Jewish Schools and youth movements.
- Include a deep encounter with Israel's natural environment in youth movement Israel tours to engage participants with ecological challenges and triumphs.

Lifestyles

What We Have: Jewish Lifestyles

The lifestyle area provides the opportunity to implement insights into Jewish tradition and values in everyday ways that reconnect the practical and the educational. Ecologically helpful lifestyle changes are not merely good for the planet, but flow from core Jewish values, and offer people a range of meaningful practices that connect deeply held values with Jewish identity.

Through partnerships between environmental organizations and synagogues, the Jewish community will educate its members to lighten their environmental footprint and to restore a traditional Jewish ethic of modesty in consumption. This changing ethic will be related to canonical Jewish texts and sources.

We identify four main areas of focus in the mainstream lifestyle: Food, Consumption, Travel, Homes.

Vision for the Next Generation: Jewish Environmental Lifestyles

- Eating practices evolve in ways that are both ecologically beneficial and consonant with Jewish food teachings.
- Shabbat is recognized as an ecological value.
- Responsible consumption is the norm.
- Ecological consequences of Jewish community-sponsored air travel is accounted for.
- Jewish communities are ahead of the average community in reduced dependence on the automobile through organized carpools and carsharing where public transport is non-existent or inconvenient, and coordinated “walking school buses” for students in walking distance of school.
- A Jewish community that’s measurably healthier and more sustainable with respect to food choices.

Jewish Lifestyle Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

■ Food Goals:

- Cutting communal meat intake in half by 2015.
- A greater proportion of Jews saying berakhot and reflecting on source of the food they eat and the process by which that food reaches their dinner plates.
- A greater proportion of food eaten in Jewish institutions is locally grown. Hazon’s Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, Tuv Ha’Aretz, fosters partnerships between synagogues and JCCs and local sustainable farms. It has 30 affiliated communities across the US today and aims to increase this to 180 by 2015.
- Marked reduction in food security and hunger in all communities. Growth of programs such as Challah for Hunger, Table to Table, Hazon Yeshayah, Mazon and AJWS will have grown strongly, so that American Jews are raising and donating more dollars to help people directly in need.

Lifestyles

- Re-learning the old rhythms of simplicity and feasting. If we're successful, we hope that in 2015 American Jews will be a role model to other communities in celebrating Shabbat and holidays – Jewish and secular, national and personal – with great joy, and gatherings, and song, and wonderful feasts; and that during the other six days of the week we'll eat more lightly and more simply. Our motto will be that of our teacher, Michael Pollan: "eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants..."
- Prepare for the next shmita year. Physically and spiritually our communities and our farmlands will be prepared to implement the laws of shmita by the time of Rosh Hashanah/Sept 2015.

Following the Agriprocessors scandal American Jews are far more aware of the real costs and consequences of their food choices.

In Judaism, food is a basic area in which we strive to attain *kedusha*, holiness. It is fully congruent with this idea to explore how the way we eat today in the West generates ethical costs and environmental damage that compromise the ideal of holiness.

We would argue that reducing meat consumption as a communal norm is fully in the spirit of the Kosher Dietary laws. The Laws of Kashrut, are, at least in part, about minimizing the pain and suffering to the animal in the slaughtering process. We now know that it is only possible to eat large quantities of affordable cheap, kosher meat if the animals that are consumed are industrially raised in ways that cause them suffering throughout their lives and at their deaths.

Reducing meat consumption would also have tangible environmental and ethical benefits. According to the UN, 18% of global greenhouse gases are produced by livestock. At a time of global food shortages, 50% of grain grown in the US is fed to animals.

We will therefore propose a goal of cutting communal meat intake by half by 2015.

Further, meat that is eaten should be humanely and locally raised where possible. Initiatives such as Mitzvah Meat and Kol Foods are making kosher, pasture-fed, meat available in the United States. Supporting these startups will help make humanely produced kosher meat much more widely available.

The fair treatment of workers in the meat processing industry is an essential element of kashrut.

We propose reframing berakhot as mindfulness meditations so as to make them accessible for non-Orthodox Jews. By 2015 the goal should be that a greater proportion of Jews will say berakhot, mean them, and reflect on the sources of the food that they eat and the process by which that food reaches their supermarket shelves and dinner plates.

Lifestyles

■ Consumption Goals:

- Reducing consumption of material goods by 10%
- Generally accepted and supported practices of re-using material goods within the community, sometimes referred to as the G'mach.
- Well designed, chemical free, productive home garden are the norm within the Jewish community. Care for the garden is understood as part of the Jewish experience.
- Attention is given to the materials, designs and systems within the home, such as plumbing, electricity and recycled materials,
- A campaign to encourage observance of the Sabbath, as a model for reducing consumption.

Consumer choices are one of the main drivers of environmental degradation, through the incentives they provide for the manufacturing and disposal of wasteful, superfluous and short-lived items.

It is, of course, impossible and intrusive to attempt to legislate peoples' private consumption decisions. We will influence communal norms by adopting consensus standards limiting conspicuous consumption, for example at public celebrations such as weddings and Bar Mitzvahs, as well as modeling more sustainable practices at various institutions.

This would be in line with the sumptuary laws limiting public displays of wealth that operated in many medieval and early modern Jewish communities. It will also be fully consonant with the ethics of a period of prolonged economic recession during which many more Jewish families will be unable to keep up with previous communal expectations to display affluence.

Shabbat is a precious spiritual and ecological resource. It contains wisdom that is profoundly needed today about how to place limits on the untrammled pursuit of wealth that is one of the drivers of ecological destruction.

Lifestyles

■ Travel Goals:

- **Jewish Organizations should seek to eliminate air travel when it isn't necessary.**
- **Organizations install video conferencing facilities that can substitute for intercontinental travel. (This will also save money and makes sense in the current economic climate.)**
- **Bike racks and safe bicycle parking in every Jewish school and communal institution**
- **Safe routes to all Jewish day schools, Hebrew schools and preschools for walking and biking.**

Organizations should, as a matter of course, offset the carbon emissions produced by their activities, e.g. through projects such as the Heschel Center's Good Energy Initiative.

- **Air Travel** Getting on an airplane is the most ecologically damaging thing that most of us can do in our daily lives. At the same time, we need to recognize that Jews, as a globally dispersed people, fly more than than average. Moreover the educational model of many Jewish schools, youth movements and organizations involves deepening connections to Israel, and entails flying large numbers of people between Israel and the Jewish centers of the Diaspora.

This situation is unlikely to change dramatically soon. Jews will remain dispersed and Israel will continue to be of central importance to the Jewish people. Given these facts, the organized Jewish community needs to take responsibility for the ecological consequences that follow from it.

- **Auto Travel** – The large Jewish communities are at an advantage when it comes to auto travel: Because of the prohibitions on travel on Shabbat, many communities, especially the Orthodox and Modern Orthodox, are built within walking distance to the synagogue or community center. It follows then that many Jewish communities are ripe models of New Urbanism.

Celebration

What We Have: Jewish Celebration:

Celebration is one of the key areas in which religious approaches have something unique to contribute to environmentalism, since environmental activism is often dour. Combining a celebration of the natural world and a vision for sustainability adds joy to the work and Judaism has unique celebrations over the course of year and a lifetime that bring people together. Love of Creation is manifested in celebration. If we celebrate the world we will be inspired to work to save it.

■ **Tu B'Shvat, Jewish Arbor Day and a New Year for the Trees**

The Jewish calendar is synchronized with the seasons, and each year on the 15th day of the month of Shevat, just as the almond trees start to bloom in Israel, we celebrate Tu B'shvat, New Year for the trees. Tu B'shvat is celebrated globally by adults and children and marks a dedicated time on the Jewish calendar for celebrating the natural world.

■ **Shalosh Regalim, Pilgrimage Festivals**

The Shalosh Regalim, the three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot, (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles) are the central celebrations of the Jewish calendar, and were originally intimately related to the cycles of the agricultural year. During the past 2000 years, these meanings have been largely superseded by the historical and theological significance of those festivals, however at the heart of those festivals is ecological significance.

■ **Communal Celebrations and Lifecycle events**

Personal celebrations and lifecycle events such as weddings and b'nai mitzvah, need to be undertaken with sensitivity to the environment.

Where We Are: What is Going on in The Jewish Community Now

■ **Tu B'Shvat**

Tu B'shvat has made its mark in schools, synagogues and communities across the world. There are many diverse celebrations which occur in the week surrounding Tu B'shvat ranging from a Green Kiddush,⁸ to a Tu B'shvat Seder and tree planting.

■ **Holidays**

Canfei Nesharim provides Torah-based activities, program resources, and divrei Torah which relate environmental themes to seven different times of the Jewish year: Sukkot and water, Chanukah and energy, Tu b'Shevat and the environment, Purim, Passover, Counting the Omer, and the Three Weeks.

⁸ <http://www.riverdaley.org/clientuploads/forms/greenkiddush.pdf>

Celebration

■ Celebrations

Where Jews United for Justice has published a Green and Just Celebrations guide used by Jewish Communities across the Greater Washington area for making greener purchasing decisions.

Vision for the Next Generation: Jewish Celebration

- Tu B'Shvat celebration is expanded as a modern Jewish environmental holiday and celebrated as the New Year for Trees.
- The ecological significance of the holidays and seasons in the Jewish calendar are renewed and integral to the celebration.
- Communities and families celebrate life's milestones and accomplishments by enriching the natural world.
- To reclaim the ecological significance of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot.

Jewish Celebration Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

- **Guidelines to help people make more sustainable decisions when it comes to celebrating a lifecycle or communal event.**
- **Communal norm to integrate the natural world into lifecycle events.**

Assets and Greening of Institutions.

What We Have: Jewish Assets

Jewish communities around the world own and operate a large network of buildings, campuses, business and institutions outside of Israel. Within Israel, we are responsible for the planning and management of cities, forests, and a system of agriculture. The Jewish communities also manage and invest significant sums of money for charities and investment funds. Together, the facilities and investment funds represent some of the Jewish Assets addressed in this plan.

Cities are the physical assets that have the greatest environmental impact worldwide. According to some studies, urban design and architecture can determine up to 70% of a country's greenhouse gas, deriving from the key components of buildings, electricity use and transport systems. It is estimated that by 2050, 80% of the world's population will live in cities. Building high density, low impact, climate- friendly urban environments is therefore of crucial importance for averting climate change and fostering sustainability.

As a Jewish country that is home to cutting-edge building and energy technologies, Israel has the potential to develop world-leading green cities that can set a global standard for sustainability. Furthermore, Jewish tradition contains profound wisdom about urban planning that can inform this process. For example the biblical requirement (Numbers 35: 1-5) that cities be surrounded by green belts (which inspired the garden suburb movement in the 1920's.)

Jerusalem, in particular, presents an extraordinary opportunity. As a city that is holy to three major world religions with more than 3 billion adherents, the symbolic significance of Jerusalem is huge. Establishing Jerusalem as a model green city is a feasible goal that could have a huge impact on sustainable urban planning world wide.

Where We Are: What is Going on in The Jewish Community Now

With the support of programs like the Jewish Greening Fellowship, Jewish agencies are taking the lead in modeling meaningful Jewish responses to global climate change. Twenty JCCs and camps in the New York region are undergoing energy audits of their facilities, instituting green teams, implementing energy efficiency upgrades, greening their operations and providing innovative programs for their constituents to teach them what they can do to make a difference.

The city of Jerusalem, under the leadership of Mayor Nir Barkat and Deputy Mayor Naomi Tsur, has placed greening the city at the top of its list of priorities. There are plans for developing five new urban parks, an extensive light railway system (under construction), major development of green roofs, a proliferation of urban gardens, and integration of environmental concerns into the education system at all levels.

Arad, a city in the Negev desert also presents an immense opportunity. Arad is the future home to Israel's largest solar energy park offering the potential to supply a portion of clean energy needed to power a medium to large scale eco-city. It is the second largest municipal landsite in Israel, most of which is undeveloped. With incentives in the form of government subsidies for developing the Negev, some of the cleanest air in the world it has become a focus for plans to build a model eco-city with planning, energy, water and transport systems that can serve as a template for building sustainable cities in a variety of different environments and climates worldwide.

Vision for the Next Generation: Jewish Assets

- That every Jewish organization and institution has a Green Team responsible for recommending and implementing sustainability measures for the organization.
- That Jewish facilities operate efficiently and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to conform to Copenhagen agreements and the recommendation to stabilize the atmosphere at 350 parts per million of CO₂.

Assets and Greening of Institutions.

Vision for the Next Generation: Jewish Assets

- Investment and banking decisions will be made with environmental and social investment criteria; by the end of seven years 20% of money invested by Jewish institutions will use environmental criteria without sacrificing returns.
- To establish Jerusalem as a world-leading, green city embodying the best in sustainable energy, water, transport use, and beautiful and innovative urban green spaces, so that it can be a source of inspiration and emulation for sustainable urban design world wide.
- To create a model desert eco-city in Arad using technologies that can be employed by other cities facing similar climactic and natural resource challenges.

Assets and Greening of Institutions.

Jewish Assets – Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

Goals for Achieving Vision on Greening Assets:

- **By 2010, all Jewish institutions should establish an in-house Green Team responsible for recommending and implementing measures to make the running of the organization more environmentally sustainable.**
- **Jewish buildings improve energy efficiency, buy renewable energy wherever possible, and offset the remaining footprint.**
- **Jewish organizations reduce energy consumption next year by 10% by and the following year by a further 10% by taking efficiency measures and educating staff about energy saving.**
- **Investment and banking decisions will be made with environmental criteria; by the end of next year 5% of money invested by Jewish institutions will use environmental criteria without sacrificing returns.**
- **By 2015 US Jewish foundations will aim to invest 18% of their endowments in Israeli clean energy companies, simultaneously fulfilling Jewish, Zionist, environmental and business goals.**
- **The Jewish community runs training seminars for charitable foundation boards, endowment committees, and professionals to promote environmentally responsible investment decisions.**

In Jerusalem:

1. Jerusalem will be recognized as a world-leading green city by 2015.
2. Jerusalem's Jewish, Christian and Muslim residents will work together to develop the next stage of the city's green development program.

In Arad:

1. Building a team of city designers, water transport, land use and energy experts around the Arad "Desert Greens" project.
2. Developing a plan and detailed designs with the goal of begin construction of the Arad eco-city by September 2015.

Policy and Advocacy

In the US and the UK Jewish communities have an opportunity to leverage political capital and to speak up nationally on environmental issues, but we have relatively little clout overall. Where possible the community could be part of multi-faith coalitions arguing for stronger climate change policies.

Jewish communities can and should have more impact locally and should seek to implement policy changes within cities and states. Our communities will learn that environmental justice is the belief that no community should have to bear the brunt of a disproportionate amount of environmental burdens and not enjoy any environmental benefits.

Where We Are: What is Going on Now

The Israeli environmental movement has been successful in recent years, with relatively few financial and organizational resources. Organizations including the Heschel Center, Adam Teva V'Din, SPNI, and the Arava Institute have scored major legislative victories in areas including coastal development, ocean ecosystem protection and urban planning. Diaspora Jewish communities could influence significant world change by supporting the Israeli environmental organizations.

■ Climate Legislation in the USA

COEJL, Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, had until recently a Jewish environmental voice on Capitol Hill lobbying for climate change legislation. Synagogues can affiliate with groups like Inter-faith Light and Power and support ILP's effective lobbying campaigns. Advocates for Jewish ideals like The Shalom Center (Rabbi Arthur Waskow) have been thought-leaders for many years. The next phase of this work should amplify these positions, where appropriate. Ideally we need to find ways to integrate the work of the Jewish environmental organizations and movement with the federations and mainstream institutions. The increasingly close working relationships in NY between, e.g., Isabella Freedman, Teva and Hazon, on the one hand, and UJA-Federation of NY and the JCC in Manhattan, on the other, is a model for this.

■ The Food Bill

Hazon is coordinating a Jewish ethical and policy input to the 2014 US Farm Bill. The thrust will be towards cutting subsidies for industrial mono-crop production, supporting local and organic food, and reducing the American food systems dependence on fossil fuels. (Today US food production and transportation contributes between 25 and 37% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.)

■ Transportation Policy

Hazon is expanding its efforts to advocate for more sustainable US transport alternatives including increased mass transit, additional bicycle lanes and other livable streets initiatives. A recent example of a local victory came in October 2009 with the approval of additional bike lanes on the Upper West Side resulting from Hazon's community organization.

■ Economy

The move to a green economy requires the creation of new green jobs. Jewish Funds for Justice has begun a campaign in the Jewish community to support job training and the creation of new entry level green jobs at a liveable wage.

The Jewish community should use their power as consumers and their professional positions to advocate for better systems at industrial and institutional levels.

Policy and Advocacy

Vision for the Next Generation: Jewish Environmental Policy and Advocacy

- The Israeli environmental community together with Diaspora Jewish education campaigns for binding carbon limiting legislation that will cut Israel's emissions 20% by 2020 and 90% by 2048.
- Israel's environmental organizations and clean energy companies combine to lobby the government for a significant feed-in tariff for renewable energy, and substantial investment in Israel's world-leading clean-energy technologies and companies.
- There is a significant Jewish environmental voice on Capitol Hill lobbying for climate change legislation.

Jewish Policy and Advocacy Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

• Attention

In order to effectively devote attention to advocacy, every organization in the Jewish community commits 1.8% of its time and budget to pursuing changes in American public policy through community organizing, lobbying, public vigils, religious celebrations with an activist component, and other such means to join in a concerted effort to make this Jewish vision of healing the world into practical reality.

• Voice

Jewish communities should be a leading voice worldwide in speaking out for policies that will help avert climate change, rebalance the environment, promote sustainability and ecological destruction and bring about environmental justice.

• Climate Legislation in the State of Israel

The State of Israel should adopt ambitious energy and environmental policies that place it at the forefront of the global campaign to avert climate change.

The State of Israel, the world's only Jewish state is starting to join the world effort to combat climate change. It needs to act, not just as a demographically Jewish country but as one that bears responsibility for implementing a well-established Jewish ethic for environmental stewardship. This is an issue that needs to be addressed by Rabbinical leaders in Israel as well as by the national government.

• Clean Energy Policy in Israel

Israel's environmental organizations and clean energy companies should combine to lobby the government for a significant feed-in tariff for renewable energy, and substantial investment in Israel's world-leading clean-energy technologies and companies. US Jewish organizations should support the Israeli ecology movement in lobbying. Some proportion of US government aid should be funneled into sustainable power projects including cross-border peace-building initiatives.

Policy and Advocacy

Jewish Policy and Advocacy Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

Electricity accounts for the vast majority of Israel's greenhouse gas emissions; reduction efforts should focus in this sector. Because of its total reliance on fossil fuels, 63% of Israel's greenhouse gas emissions come from its electric power plants – three quarters of which burn coal – the most GHG intensive fuel in use today. In light of this the main components of climate change policy in Israel need to be:

- **Energy conservation measures** that can lead to immediate reductions in electricity and petrol consumption.
- Dramatic changes in the sources of electrical power in the country. Israel needs a **no new coal power stations policy**. Ambitious objectives for Israel are realistic. Denmark already takes 25% of its energy from renewable sources (largely wind) and anticipates 50% levels by 2025. Given its optimal location for solar power generation, Israel should declare an objective of generating 30% of its energy from renewables by 2020, and energy independence by 2050.
- **Carbon Price**. There should be an economy-wide price on carbon so that climate costs become incorporated into business and governmental decision-making. We favor a carbon tax as the simplest, most transparent method.
- **Transport Policy**. Transportation produces some 19% of Israel's green house emissions. Taxes for new automobiles, already over 100% should be tiered to reflect the fuel efficiency of vehicles. Public transportation, already subsidized should be even more so. Congestion fees should be adopted for Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Laws and subsidies should encourage greater use of bicycles, walking and public transport.
- **Afforestation Policy**. It should be noted that this is, on the whole, a significant success of Israeli environmental policy. The State of Israel is the only country in the world with a positive tree balance over the past century. The methods by which this was accomplished could be exported to other countries struggling with deforestation.

Building on the efforts of the Heschel Center and the Israel Union for Environmental Defense, the Israeli environmental community should campaign for binding carbon limiting legislation that will cut Israel's emissions 20% by 2020 and 90% by 2048.

Partnership

What We Have: Jewish Environmental Partnerships

The Founding Partners of this campaign in the US, all relatively young Jewish environmental organizations with complementary goals, have partnered through this effort to create a Green Hevre, a friendly group, to meet quarterly and further the goals of growing attention to environmental topics.

Other partnerships are developing in different communities.

In Israel, The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) and the Teva Learning Center are piloting a program called "A Renewable Light Unto the Nations: Jewish Communities Working Together for a Sustainable Future." The interactive curriculum is being prepared for NY-Israel Connections Partnerships (through the UJA Federation of New York and the Jewish Agency), and may ultimately be used by other Partnership 2000 communities. The project both encourages collaboration between Israeli and North American Jewish environmental professionals and strengthens school and community partnerships. New York and Israel partners forge relationships and raise environmental awareness through the exploration of Jewish environmental values and the implementation of local green action projects (School Gardens, Energy Audits, and Green Mapping). Through the projects, which are built on content-rich, online educational modules, students learn about and act upon Jewish values of community and environmental/social responsibility. Together, they will become part of a collective Jewish response to the problems of global climate change.

Where We Are: What is Going on in The Jewish Community Now

The Holy Land Declaration

This is a project of JCI aimed at bringing together Jewish Christian and Muslim religious leaders and communities in the Holy Land around a commitment to take action on climate change.

Vision for the Next Generation: Jewish Partnerships

- Jewish environmental organizations leverage strong partnerships to ensure that the Jewish communities are able to address all facets of sustainability and effectively work in all nine boxes of the 3x3 grid – across environmental topics.
- Jewish community institutions and organizations partner to foster sustainability.
- Jewish communities have interfaith partnerships to help meet our policy and lobbying goals.

Jewish Partnership Goals for Generational Change: September 2015

- **Designated environmental staff**

Jewish organizations above a certain size have an assigned environmental staff person responsible for greening the organization and establishing a vision of sustainability.

Appendix

Appendix 1 Policy Goals for Israel

Professor Alon Tal, Ben Gurion University.

Like much of the Mediterranean basin which saw average temperature increase by as much as 4 degrees C during the 20th century, the State of Israel is already affected by climate change. Israel's Ministry of Environment projects a 1.5 average increase in temperatures in 2020 – relative to 2000, with peak temperatures showing even greater changes. By the end of the 21st century, temperatures could be even as much as 4 degrees higher.

Some of the long-term predicted results are already manifested in local conditions. During the past fifteen years, the Mediterranean Sea rose 8.5 cm. while average rainfall dropped 13% during the past 16 years: from 1,350 to 1,175 mm. The frequency of extreme rain events has increased as have the very hot summer days where temperatures cross over the 30 Celsius mark, even in cool regions like Jerusalem. Projected effects of continued warming include flooding of coastal regions, increased damaged due to the ferocity of rainstorms, loss of agricultural productivity, habitat loss, etc. Regardless of the precision of present predictions, it is already clear that the Promised Land is becoming warmer and the effects are often negative.

Sadly, since it signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Rio De Janeiro in 1992, the Jewish State has chosen a path of least resistance on climate policy. By retaining its status as a “developing country” in practice, Israel has not been required to begin the ratcheting down of emissions mandated under the Kyoto Protocol. Legislation has been fielded in the Knesset which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2020 and by 50% in 2050 – yet the bill was not passed in the 17th Knesset. High level Israeli representation at the annual meeting of the UN Climate Convention has been conspicuously absent.

In fact, Israel has conducted the required inventories. It has also been the site of “Clean Development Mechanism” projects, where developed countries, invest in inexpensive emissions reductions in developing countries, and use the credit towards meeting their own carbon equivalent ceilings. But, with the exception of Israel's remarkable afforestation efforts, there is little impressive about Israel's efforts to reduce its greenhouse burden.

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reported in 2006 that the country emits 73.5 million tons of CO₂ equivalent per year. In international rankings, Israel has the 28th highest per capita green house gas emission levels in the world. Rather than taking proactive initiatives – or at the very least “no-regrets” energy conservation initiatives, over the 17 years since the treaty was signed, Israel has extended its dependence on fossil fuels, with electricity consumption increasing by 6% a year.

Even if Israel itself was not already feeling the direct impact of climate change and was not projected to be one of the “losers” from the world's changing weather, there would be compelling reasons for the Jewish state to aggressively seek to become a climate leader. First of all, there is an ethical imperative to be part of the global solution rather than the problem. A state founded on the prophetic vision of becoming a “light unto the nations” needs to express in its actions a sense of solidarity with the planet and the billions and scores of ecosystems who stand to suffer enormously the effects of a warmer planet.

In fact, with Australia and the U.S. now moving into the “Kyoto” family, Israel remains the lone Western country who has not made a commitment to reduce its greenhouse gases. Its aspiration to become an OECD nation will surely force it to change its position. But, surely economically it makes sense to show resourcefulness and embrace the technological opportunities that the climate crisis offers. As the first country in the world to require passive solar heating in building in the 1970s, Israel was once a leader in solar technologies. Its engineers and researchers remain in the front of the field, producing the world's first solar power stations in the U.S. and recently throughout Europe. And yet, not withstanding the energy savings associated with hot water heating, to date there has not been meaningful electricity generation whatsoever in Israel. Clearly, the Jewish State can do much better.

A Climate Change Agenda for the Jewish State

Israel's first step must be to join the developed nations of the world in setting a clear ceiling for reducing its green house gas emissions and taking concrete measures to meet these targets. Whether Israel needs to use 1990 as a baseline or one based on 1995 (due to the massive immigration experienced during this period from the former Soviet Union) is an issue that remains to be resolved. But clearly, Israeli commitments should be commensurate with other northern Mediterranean countries of comparable economic capacity.

A complete master plan for addressing greenhouse gases emissions needs to be prepared that addresses the full range of potential reductions – from methane collection at solid waste tips to dietary strategies for Israel's extensive livestock population. A cap and trade program, like that recently enacted in New Zealand might be an innovative and effective policy instrument.

Appendix

Appendix 1 Policy Goals for Israel

Yet, as electricity accounts for the vast majority of Israel's greenhouse gas emissions, reduction efforts should focus in this sector. Because of its total reliance fossil fuels, 63% of Israel's greenhouse gas emissions come from its electric power plants – three quarters of which burn coal – the most greenhouse gas intensive fuel in use today. Presently, the Israeli government has approved an additional coal-fired plant in Ashkelon which would increase CO₂ emissions by a further 10 percent.

Israel's electricity strategy should be two fold:

- Energy conservation measures leading to immediate reductions in electricity and petrol consumption.
- Dramatic acceleration in changing the sources of electrical power in the country.

Energy conservation by definition requires public involvement. Relying on the old adage from the Mishna: "You don't have to complete the task, but neither are you are free to avoid it" – educational programs and media campaigns should target all ages. Israel's public has already shown that it is able and willing to answer the call to save scarce resources. A 2008 national advertising campaign to save water after four consecutive drought years led to marked reduction in household consumption. Israelis willingly respond to urgent requests to donate blood, participate in bone marrow data bases and serve in a variety of security contexts. Yet, they have never been seriously asked to consider their behavior with regards to electricity consumption. Besides saving individual consumer's money, there is a compelling geopolitical context for energy conservation in Israel. A major national media campaign should appeal to Israelis' proven environmental commitment and economic prudence.

The measures that need to be promoted are no different than the voluntary actions expected of people enjoying Western lifestyles everywhere. Shifting to compact fluorescent lights and turning them and appliances off when not in use, using ceiling fans in lieu of air conditioners, wearing sweaters in winters – the menu goes on and on. It is well known and intuitively appealing. Yet, public policies should provide sticks and carrots to ensure that conservation efforts are effective. While Israel has enacted legally binding criterion for insulation in construction, compliance is notoriously inadequate. A voluntary green building standard should be toughened and made mandatory for all new buildings. Existing homes need be redesigned, with small grants and tax credits provided to expedite the transition. Energy efficiency standards need to be adopted and enforced for all household appliances with awards granted to public institutions and municipalities who show particularly conspicuous success. Municipalities and other public institutions should be required to submit detailed plans of progress.

At the same time Israel has to aggressively promote a new policy of clean energy production. This should begin with a moratorium on new coal-fired plants, including the Ashkelon facility. If conventional power plants are required during an interim stage, new natural gas reserves, recently discovered off Israel's Mediterranean coasts offer a strong economic justification for non-coal power plants.

While presently subsidies exist for electricity supplied individual use of photovoltaic roofs, these are designed to support small, individual generators only. In fact, Israel's land resources are minimal and its solar strategy must take into account the need for concentrated solar technologies which will allow maximum electricity production with minimal use of lands. Agricultural lands, no longer under cultivation should be rezoned with minimum bureaucratic burden.

Ambitious objectives for Israel are realistic. Denmark already takes 25% of its energy from renewable sources (largely wind) and anticipates 50% levels by 2025. Given its optimal location for solar power generation, Israel should declare an objective of energy independence by 2050. While the sun will provide most of the power in large Negev facilities, the feasibility of offshore Mediterranean windfarms to supplement major power plants should be reviewed closely.

Transportation

Transportation produces some 19% of Israel's green house emissions. Here again, the laundry list of available policies is long. Taxes for new automobiles, already over 100% should be tiered to reflect the fuel efficiency of vehicles. Public transportation, already subsidized should be even more so. Congestion fees, which so successfully reduced traffic entering London should be adopted for Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem – the three primary commuter destinations of the country. In general, Israeli employment policies presently encourage private car use by direct subsidies in salaries. Laws can change this and encourage greater use of bicycles, walking and public transport.

Appendix

Appendix 2: Policy Goals for The United States

Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Director, The Shalom Center

We invite participants to join the movement by supporting and calling upon the US Congress to pass legislation that:

- Ends all subsidies for oil, coal, and corn biofuel production and places a moratorium on the building of any new coal plants. It should provide a transition away from the use of coal, the dirtiest and most polluting of the fossil fuels, as quickly as possible.
- Commits the US to reaching the “Hanukkah standard” for the use of oil by 2020 – reducing the use of oil as a fuel to 1/8 the amount being used in 2008. (“One day’s oil for eight days’ needs.”)
- Devotes massive resources to research, development, and deployment of transportation and construction based on wind and solar energy – including high-speed rail, electric cars, wind farms, solar installations, and the reshaping of neighborhoods to eliminate fossil fuel based transportation and to encourage walking, biking and clean energy public transit.
- Commits the US to take up the American share of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by the developed countries by 40% of 1990 levels by 2020, and commits the US to help achieve by 2020 the limit of 350 parts per million carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, using whatever combination of cap-and invest, carbon fees on high-carbon fuels, early replacement of wasteful coal power plants and low-mileage autos, and other steps that will produce that result.
- Submits all cap-and-invest “permits to pollute” to auction, giving as few away for free as viable.
- Transfers the funds raised by carbon fees and cap-and-invest auctions to drastic reductions in payroll taxes on low-income and middle-income Americans, and to vouchers for use of home insulation, public transit, and other energy efficiencies.
- Sets aside substantial funds to meet the special needs of economic conversion for regions, businesses, and workers in the US that are heavily impacted by these changes.
- Sets aside substantial funds to assist poorer nations in the world to follow a non-fossil path toward economic improvement and to meet the urgent needs of societies that are specifically vulnerable to climate-caused disaster.

Appendix

Appendix 3: Food and Transportation Examples

Food	Education	Action	Advocacy
<p>Individual & Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn and Read about food choices, and their impact in the world http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues http://jcarrot.org/resources/books-films-and-cool-stuff • Attend events and programs that discuss food issues http://www.hazon.org/go.php?q=/food/conference/2009FC/theHazonFoodConference.html • Reading resources that help guide sustainable food purchases http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx (food chart) • Read: the Omnivore’s Dilemma by Michael Pollan and Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser http://www.foodincmovie.com/reading-list.php • See the film Food Inc. (Food Inc Website) and the documentary Renewal http://www.foodincmovie.com/index.php http://www.renewalproject.net/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat less meat • Join a CSA – or found one http://www.localharvest.org/csa/ • Support your local Farmer’s Market • Buy Local and Organic • Compost http://www.howtocompost.org/ • Be less wasteful, only take what you will eat! • Make small changes—ex: avoiding dairy products with hormones, purchasing cage free eggs • Buy in bulk (less costly and more environmentally friendly!) • Plant a vegetable garden http://www.backyardgardener.com/veg/ • No high fructose corn syrup! • Use reusable bags when food shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak up for change in your community: writing to a local official – or a national one https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml • Attend local town hall meetings / community events to speak up for local food at schools, synagogues, community centers • Sign-up for national advocacy alerts http://sierraactivist.org/ http://liveearth.org/
<p>Institution: Synagogue, Community Center, School or other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a class a few times a week or month on Jews, food & contemporary issues http://www.hazon.org/go.php?q=/food/curriculum/HazonFoodCurriculum.html • Approach and discuss kashrut with a specific focus on how it applies to environment http://rabbimorrisallen2.blogspot.com/omental-sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a Community Supported Agriculture program at your institution, such as Tuv Ha’Aretz http://www.hazon.org/go.php?q=/food/CSA/aboutTuvHa%27Aretz.html • Examine all food sourcing in your institution – how can you make sure that food served is more sustainable and ethical in all respects? Refer to Hazon’s “Greening Food Guide” (in the works) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to elected officials, host events to bring awareness and discussion to these issues • Partner with environmental organizations and other institutions to work together to help enact change

Appendix

Appendix 3: Food and Transportation Examples

Food	Education	Action	Advocacy
<p>Institution: Synagogue, Community Center, School or other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an educational program on sustainable food Min Ha’Aretz http://www.hazon.org/food/minHaaretz Send members to the Hazon Food Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant a garden for educational programs and activities http://www.jewishfarmschool.org/ http://www.for-wild.org/seedmony.html Implement Compost and Recycling Programs– check municipalities for available services for waste management in your area http://earth911.com/ Donate surplus food to local food pantries http://feedingamerica.org/default.aspx?SHOW_SHOV=1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak-up in the Jewish community about the importance of environmental sustainability Advocate for changes in the next Farm Bill (farm bill 101, shmita project, 7 year goals)
<p>Greater Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have experts come to educate others unfamiliar with food and climate change issues Make sure your library has these books: the Omnivore’s Dilemma by Michael Pollan and Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser Work to educate across many community institutions to share resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop or Join in on a community garden http://www.communitygarden.org/ Join or create inter-faith learning opportunities http://www.greenfaith.org/ http://www.theregenerationproject.org/ Create community events and panels where people can come together to discuss these issues Come together with other institutions to establish a Farmer’s Market and/ or CSA Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a community initiative to reduce the community’s carbon footprint, with set goals and a time frame Join city-wide coalitions to work together on creating change in the community Join in on already established initiatives (JC3) http://www.pewclimate.org/states-regions Create a “Climate Change/ Earth Fair” http://www.riverdaley.org/index.php?sub-menu=greening&src=gendocs&ref=GreeningRiverdale&category=community

Appendix

Appendix 3: Food and Transportation Examples

For a community where transportation is a topic of concern:

Transportation	Education	Action	Advocacy
Individual & Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about the impact of transportation choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riding your bike to school or work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak up for change in your community. Write to a local official asking for better bike lanes.
Institution: Synagogue, Community Center, School or other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring in Jewish educators or environmental educators to speak or teach on oil consumption and bal tashchit or the related security issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the Israeli environmental movement Sending a team to a Hazon bike ride Putting in bike parking at your institution (ideally indoor parking, and showers) and encouraging people to use them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with green orgs to work together for change Liaise locally with organizations like Transportation Alternatives, or nationally with the Shalom Center or the Sierra Club, to write to elected officials;
Greater Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to neighboring schools, churches, mosques and temples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create or support a campaign for bike-lanes and pedestrian and child-friendly policies in your community; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite elected officials to speak in your institution – and invite other local institutions; Sign-up for national advocacy alerts

Appendix

Appendix 4: Environmental Topics

- Land Quality
- Air Quality
- Water Quality and Availability
- Climate Change
- Biodiversity
- Energy
- Health
- Food