

## Judaism and Environmental Ethics

- God has absolute ownership over the universe. He created it and human beings must acknowledge that although they have freedom to use the environment, they do not have unrestricted freedom to abuse/misuse it. 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof' - Psalm 24
- Genesis 9: 'Every creature that lives shall be yours to eat; as with the green grasses, I give you all these.'
- Use, preserve and conserve; do not abuse, we owe it to future generations
- Humans are to live in a sustainable way and replenish the earth
- *Shemittah* = the Sabbatical year
- Kosher slaughter
- Genesis 1: God found His creation 'very good' i.e. sufficient and ordered, harmonious. Humans have a duty to preserve this
- Humans, made in God's image have certain qualities that allow them to be stewards/caretakers of the Earth
- The Torah prohibits the extinction of species and causing undue pain to non-human creatures. Deuteronomy 22: 'If along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother sitting over the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the mother with her young. Let the mother go and take only the young, in order that you may fare well and have a long life.'
- The Talmudic sages teach that the role of mankind is to enhance the world as 'co-partners of God in the work of creation.' – Talmud
- A midrash states: 'See my works, how fine and excellent they are!  
Now all that I have created, for you have I created.  
Think upon this and do not corrupt and desolate My World,  
For if you corrupt it, there is no one to set it right after you.'
- Gleaning
- Everything is connected to everything else: Psalm 104: 'Thou are the One Who sends springs forth into brooks, that they may run between mountains, to give drink to every beast of the fields; the creatures of the forest quench their thirst.'
- Jewish adherents are obliged to enhance and repair where necessary God's creation. This is called *tikkun olam* and it involves both social justice and care for the environment
- JNF
- *Bal taschchit* – Deuteronomy 20: 19 -20

## Bibliography

Chabad.org  
Greenfaith.org  
NSW Jewish Board of Deputies