
Allen, E. L. “The Hebrew View of Nature.” The Journal of Jewish Studies 2, no. 1 (1951): 100–104. Allen argues that nature is not seen in abstraction from God, nor are the tasks given to humans from God, but rather, humans share their own origin with nature. In the Jewish experience of exile, Allen demonstrates the close connection between the Jewish people and land, thereby emphasizing that there is no neutral background to the history of the Jewish people, but rather that it has always been imbued with God. In describing the Hebrew view of nature, Allen explains that the land can suffer for people’s sins and that the land has a right to a period of rest. With regard to animals, he outlines two classification systems: clean and unclean, wild and tame. He also draws on scripture by referring to the righteous man in Proverbs who advises good treatment of animals. After demonstrating how the Israelites had recognized moral restraints on the human use of power over nature, he advocates a return to that lost harmony of human and nature.


Alpert, Rebecca T., and Arthur Waskow. “Toward an Ethical Kashrut.” Reconstructionist 52, no. 5 (1987): 9–13. Alpert and Waskow reconstruct the traditional and contemporary practices and understandings of kashrut (Jewish dietary practices) by drawing on the teachings of Mordecai Kaplan. Having addressed the specifically Jewish character of kashrut, the authors list what they perceive as the contemporary ethical concerns that are not addressed by traditional kashrut (e.g., oshek) that represent the prohibition of oppressing workers and other concerns relating to respect for animals. Seeking a reintegration of the ritual and ethical dimensions of Jewish life, Alpert and Waskow try to account for the potential varieties of “new kashrut.” Their concluding argument reveals that the common ground between Jewish groups pursuing social justice and those pursuing personal ritual observance is the need to strengthen the concern for ethical behavior within the present institutions of kashrut.

Alter, Robert. The Art of Biblical Narrative. New York: Basic Books, 1981. Alter has the general objective of illuminating the distinctive principles of narrative found in the Hebrew Bible. Focusing on the Pentateuch and Former Prophets, Alter demonstrates how these books describe the interaction of God, humanity, and the natural world. Illustrated with his own translations of Biblical passages, he explores matters of word-choice,
sound-play, and syntax in the original Hebrew. He also explores the general conventions of opening formulas for Near Eastern epics: parallel clauses, orderly sequence, vertical perspective, the rhythmic process of incremental repetition, and the symmetrical envelope structure. Alter also addresses Yahwist (J) and Priestly (P) versions of the Bible and illustrates the effectiveness of composite narrative.


A useful annotated bibliography of more than 400 items covering a diverse range of post-WWII English-language literature on environmental attitudes and ethics. Popular as well as scholarly books and articles are included, among them many dealing with Christianity, the Church, and Christian theology. An appendix lists other bibliographies, directories, and indices, and there are subject and proper name indices.


Artson, Bradley S. "Each After Their Own Kind: A Jewish Celebration of Biodiversity." Tikkun 12, no. 5 (September-October 1997): 43–45.

Artson illustrates the utilitarian, aesthetic, and intellectual benefits of biodiversity. He argues that the Jewish understanding of humanity as God’s steward is a commitment, or mitzvah (religious mandate), that is intended to sustain diversity. After drawing on the narratives of the Flood and Noah’s ark as well as on other biblical and rabbinic sources, Artson then looks at issues of biodiversity in halacha (e.g., kilayim [sending the mother bird away], the slaughtering of an animal and its young, and kashrut).


Calling for a second stage of Jewish response the environmental crisis, Artson heavily critiques the first stage as having been overly apologetic in its conforming to already established political categories rather than evoking a more genuine Jewish response in terms of its own categories. Disapproving of the lack of contextualization in which Rabbinic and Biblical sayings have been utilized in the environmental debate, Artson demonstrates the depth of thought in regarding land sanctity in Rabbinic law, Mishnah, and Talmud. He emphasizes that Diaspora Jews carry with them a strong sense of the Holy Land and therefore they observe the sanctity of land wherever they may dwell as they shift the weight of their religious observances to those that may be practiced anywhere.


Bak addresses the legal problems of leaving the land of Israel uncultivated for one year as prescribed in the Torah in three places. He lists four reasons for implementing a sabbatical year: to conserve land from over exhaustion, to have a year dedicated to spiritual values and practice, to encourage charity, and to teach that the land is given in trust and is not our possession. In addition to the agricultural obligations involved in a sabbatical year, there is an obligation to relieve all debts as well. Bak considers the questions of: whether or not the sabbatical year is a Rabbinic or biblical duty, and whether or not the selling of land to non-Jews during that time period is appropriate. He concludes by outlining the reemergence of the sabbatical issue within the Zionist movement and settlement.


Benstein, Jeremy. The Way Into Judaism and the Environment. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2006. This is the sixth book of the “Way Into” series that serves as an introduction to Judaism and issues therein. This book serves as an overview of and introduction to “Judaism and Ecology.” Drawing from the Bible, rabbinic literature, midrash, the Jewish prayer book, and Jewish theology and philosophy, the author examines the dilemma of having dominion over the earth while serving and preserving it; what the Jewish calendar, including Shabbat and holidays, teaches us about our relationship with nature and the environment; and how contemporary environmental challenges present new and mind-opening opportunities for growth in Jewish thought and spiritual life.


Berman, Phyllis Ocean, and Arthur Ocean Waskow. Tales of Tikkun: New Jewish Stories to Heal the Wounded World. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson Inc., 1996. Berman and Waskow’s text illustrates the concept of tikkun (to heal the wounds). Claiming not to have lost the original meaning of the stories they utilize, they address the exclusivity of the ancient stories by performing what they call “new midrash” on both Torah and Talmud in order to provide new insights to these stories. Their stated goal is to awaken new listening in the listener and to teach how one can tell one’s own stories of tikkun. Eleven tales (e.g., “The Return of Captain Noah,” “Why Hagar Left,” and “Jealous Sister, Jealous God,” etc.) are included in this book. The final chapter of the book provides specific sources for each of the eleven tales.


Bernstein, Ellen. The Splendor of Creation: A Biblical Ecology. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2005. Drawing upon an immanent and mystical understanding of God, the author explores the first chapter of Genesis. The driving question throughout is, Can “creation” speak to “environment”? Bernstein argues that it can and must, because “environment” implies a false sense of separation between humanity and nature. The wisdom of Genesis is that it puts the connectedness, responsibility, value, and holiness back into our relationship with the environment. Bernstein’s environmental midrash goes in both directions: the biblical text teaching environmentalists something about the sacred, and the environmentalist bringing out aspects of biblical texts that only environmentalist eyes could see.

_________. ed. Ecology and the Jewish Spirit: Where Nature and the Sacred Meet. Woodstock, Vt.: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998. This book, by the founder of “Keepers of the Earth,” is a collection of essays divided into three sections: “Sacred Place,” “Sacred Time” and “Sacred Community”. The collection includes contributors and topics such as: Eliezer Diamond, who examines passages from the Torah and the Talmud that encourage Jews to partake of the earth as a divine gift and thus to limit consumption; Debra Robbins who traces the development of the Jewish calendar to show the ways that modern Jews can use the calendar to weave ecological practice into everyday life; and, Rabbi Barry Freundel, who examines the impact of “Judaism’s environmental laws” on the formation of modern Jewish community.

Bernstein and Fink discuss a Jewish blessings and praise ritual as one example of some of the practices in Judaism intended to remind humans of their place in the web and harmony of nature. With the objective of demonstrating the importance of brachot (blessing) and giving thanks for a Jewish ecological perspective, the authors draw on Rabbi Nachman and Abraham Heschel's book, God in Search of Man, in their prayer, discussion, and reflection. They also include a textual study presented in the style of Mishnah scholars, a section on creating your own brachot activities, and a leader's worksheet.


Bernstein provides a systematic line-by-line analysis of the opening of the Mishna which is generally cited as the proof text that Judaism is spiritually alienated from nature. Calling for dissolution of the nature/Torah dichotomy, Bernstein advocates a synthesis of Torah study and experiences of nature that would spiritually ground Jewish environmentalism, thereby preventing it from becoming a passing fad. He reevaluates aspects of Judaism that have functioned in negative ways against the environment and suggests that although Judaism has protected itself historically from letting its admiration of God's creation become a form of deification, it was not until modern times that the result of such protection—desacralization, alienation, exploitation, and the devastation of nature—has become so evident. He finally examines modern and Zionist responses to the human/nature relationship.


This book is a “hikers guide” that offers 27 activities/spiritual exercises for reconnecting humans with the natural world from a Jewish perspective. Though geared toward youth, young and old can find value in these spiritual reflections while “on the trail.”


Bleich begins with the ideological perspective by mentioning normative law and those moral imperatives to which one ethically should be aspiring, if they are supported in the written or oral law. After commenting on Ethics of the Fathers written by Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura, Bleich describes three distinctive attitudes toward vegetarianism that are found in the writings of the rabbinic scholars. He mentions the favorable outlook of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook on vegetarianism but qualifies it with a more detailed explanation of the rabbi's prioritization of moral concerns. After expressing concern with whether or not ethicists accept or reject revelation, Bleich discusses the opinions surrounding simhat Yom Tov (rejoicing in the festivals with the necessity to eat meat) by mentioning the fact that the Sages, and even Rambam, would require the eating of meat on Yom Tov.

Bleich begins with the ideological perspective by mentioning normative law and those moral imperatives to which one ethically should be aspiring, if they are supported in the written or oral law. After commenting on Ethics of the Fathers written by Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura, Bleich describes three distinctive attitudes toward vegetarianism that are found in the writings of the rabbinic scholars. He mentions the favorable outlook of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook on vegetarianism but qualifies it with a more detailed explanation of the rabbi's prioritization of moral concerns. After expressing concern with whether or not ethicists accept or reject revelation, Bleich discusses the opinions surrounding simhat Yom Tov (rejoicing in the festivals with the necessity to eat meat) by mentioning the fact that the Sages, and even Rambam, would require the eating of meat on Yom Tov.

In response to Arthur Schopenhauer’s accusation that the Jewish tradition is at the root of the barbarian attitude leading to cruelty of animals, Bleich cites the many examples found in the Psalms and Proverbs that show God’s mercy toward both humankind and animals. Drawing on Rambam, Bleich discusses imitatio Dei, the legal prescriptions concerning ritual slaughter, and the prohibition against tza’ar ba’alei hayyim (pain of living creatures) as having been imposed for the benefit of human moral welfare, rather than for the sake of animals. Despite this human focus, Bleich emphasizes that it is intended to instill compassion and root out cruelty—including animal cruelty. Although halakhic law does not address medical experimentation directly, and the alleviation of pain and suffering in human beings takes precedence over that of animals, Bleich does provide some examples illustrating Jewish concern for animal welfare such as the avoidance of unanesthetized vivisection and the forbidding of hunting as a sport. While the article also addresses the controversy over the need or benefit that may warrant causing pain to animals and morality beyond the requirements of the law, it is less a direct analysis of medical experimentation than a halakhic history of Jewish regard for animals in general.


Bildstein, Gerald J. “Man and Nature in the Sabbatical Year.” Tradition 8, no. 4 (1972): 48–55. Bildstein examines two biblical passages (Ex. 23:10–11; Lev. 25:4–7) in order to describe how humankind’s technological and economic manipulation of the world is severely restricted. According to Bildstein, shemitah (the sabbatical year) is a radical religious demand on an unconsenting world that applies to poor and rich alike. He views the Exile as having upset the relationship between Israel and God through the land, and therefore, Bildstein argues, the Jewish people have not felt as bound to the Torah. He proposes that the potency of the Talmud’s later regulations on land use (for natural ends, not business transactions) and harvesting in the sabbatical year has been the historical doom of shemitah.

———. “Nature in ‘Psalms.’” Judaism 13 (winter 1964): 29–36. Bildstein examines nature as it is presented in the Psalms (specifically mentioning Psalm 8, 19, 29, 33, 147) in order to demonstrate that nature is not considered an end in itself but rather serves the psalmist as a simile and metaphor for the human experience of God, an idea that illustrates the main focus of the Psalms. He systematically analyzes the descriptions of nature in the Psalms and shows how it is used to describe evil, the good, and the beneficial. Bildstein concludes by arguing that nature points to the immanent Divine (e.g., to the supernatural power that controls nature).


Weimar and Nazi films extend historic anti-Jewish metaphors associating Christ with the tree of life and the providence of nature, and Jews with the inorganic realms of hell and of money-centered finance, into an inherent spiritual and physical dicotomy between the natural Aryan and the unnatural Jew. The process of separating Jewish stereotypes from the natural argues that Jews are neither living beings nor normal humans and frees their antagonists from societal responsibilities to protect Jewish rights, safety, health, and lives.

Braude contemplates the implications of words like “forever” and “multiply” found within passages from Genesis, Ps. 119:89, Deut. 1:10, and Ezek. 16:7. His description of how the ancient Egyptians utilized hard labor to control the population growth of the Israelite community makes it clear that Braude is focusing on divine aspects of fertility and procreation, rather than the deleterious effects of overpopulation on the environment.


After considering the moral questions that underpin modern environmental problems, Carmell suggests a shift in attitude is necessary on such topics as population control, industrial growth, and spiritual growth in order to effect significant change in a polluted world. Following a brief survey of halakhic material concerning health, amenity, ecology, and cultural pollution, Carmell forms a set of guidelines outlining this shift in attitude.


This is a special issue of CCAR devoted to Judaism and the Environment. Titles/Authors include: “The Moon to Mark the Seasons: Reform Judaism, Sacred Time, and the Environment” by Daniel Fink; “Ecology as Mitzvah” by Moshe Zemer; “The Emergence of Eco-Judaism” by Arthur Waskow; “Creation Caretaker: A Critical Role for the Twenty-First Century Rabbi” by Mark X. Jacobs; “The Zen Garden of the Hebrews: A Triptych in Words” by Everett Gendler; “Toward a Jewish Gaia Hypothesis” by Philip J. Bentley; and “Tikkun Olam Stories: Healing the Land Beneath Our Feet” by Ariel Walsh and Jane West Walsh.


In response to essays such as Lynn White, Jr.’s seminal article, “The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis,” Cohen looks at the hermeneutical history of Gen.1:28 in the Jewish and Christian traditions practice of drawing on post-biblical, mystical, and medieval sources. Cohen not only explains that this passage does not address the environment, status of women, and patterns of sexual preference directly, but also explains that it has not been traditionally used in an exploitative way, but rather as an indication of God’s relationship with all humanity and as an expression of the tension between universal commitment and God’s election of a single group of people. Methodologically, Cohen looks at the passage from the perspective of the biblical text and its readers, not the modern historian.


De-Shalit suggests that the relationship between Zionism and the environment has passed through three stages: the early romantic stage, the development stage (beginning in the 1930s), and the modern environmental attitude of the 1990s. Intending this article to be controversial and hoping to incite debate over his thesis, De-Shalit draws attention to the historical shift from a scientific to a political discourse on the environment. After explaining that Zionist development included afforestation, draining swamps, and construction in order to overcome an alien environment, De-Shalit demonstrates that the modern ethos of environmentalism is more of a scientifically-based philosophy rooted in the Enlightenment and reminiscent of rational, liberal ideology. He remains unconvinced that an objective concept of nature and environment can be produced, makes a distinction between ruralism and modern environmentalism, and demonstrates how the environment at one time fulfilled psychological needs.


This article critiques contemporary work in the area of Judaism and embodiment for not taking into account the bodies relationship to the "more than human" world and critiques the Judaism and ecology literature for focusing too much on population and reproduction rather than human embodiment. It also includes a critique of contemporary ecofeminist
thought, suggesting that it is constrained by the modernist separation of history and nature. She draws from Ancient Hebrew naturalists of the Tanakh and postmodern thinkers such as Foucault, to provide an understanding of creation, focused on natality, which does not separate bodies from the continuing process of nature-culture creation.


Noting that the context of Jewish scriptural interpretation was not one of environmental crises, Ehrenfeld and Bentley argue that traditional Judaism cannot speak to the ecological crisis itself but that it can provide historical context for some ecological ideas that are found in traditional literature and it does illustrate how they can offer guidelines for contemporary action. Contrasting Jainism with Judaism, the authors find that the human-centered teachings and stewardship principles of Judaism also include principles of restraint, non-interference, and humility integral to a full understanding of Judaism. They emphasize that the “dominion” phrases found in Genesis, although they might have been, were not interpreted in an exploitative manner within the rabbinic tradition. Claiming environmental wisdom in Judaism, the authors support their claim with a close analysis of bal tashhit (do not destroy), za’ar baalei hayyim (pain of living things), and the notion of the sabbath in rabbinic literature. They also concede that a distortion of stewardship has led to environmental destruction.


Exploring the political and metaphysical dimension of galut, Eisen first examines the classical sources regarding exile and homecoming including the influence of rabbis on the Zionists and the Bible. Part one focuses on three moments within the historical development of galut, namely the political and metaphysical exile in Genesis, the homecoming noted in Deuteronomy 28, and the struggle of the rabbis to understand exile within the sacred order of the Torah. After examining the Mishnaic and Talmudic tractates of Avodah Zarah, Eisen begins his treatment of the modern and contemporary debates in part two. Utilizing a similar methodology, he looks at leading thinkers such as Theodor Herzl, Gershom Scholem, Franz Kafka, and Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook as well as central texts in order to address the contemporary fact that the Israelis are in an unprecedented space between homecoming and redemption, something he views as a contradiction in Zionism. He also discusses the pressures of anti-Semitism and assimilation.


Eisenberg’s search for Eden mentions ecological ills in order to demonstrate what he understands as the concrete meaning of the exile from Eden. The book contains four parts. The first part illustrates biological changes over the course of the past few millennia. Part two reviews various myths, especially of the ancient Near East, in order to see what ecological facts they may have embedded within them. Part three broadens Eisenberg’s investigation to all of Western history as well as its accompanying mental landscape up to and including the Gaia hypothesis. Part four discusses the contemporary scene and defines human roles with terms such as “Planet Managers” and “Planet Fetishers.” Replete with Freudian, literary, and philosophical references, as well as general environmental information, Eisenberg’s concluding argument illustrates that the West holds most of the responsibility for contemporary environmental degradation.


This volume is the first comprehensive collection of Jewish essays, biblical passages, poems, songs, and recipes for observing the increasingly popular midwinter holiday of Tu B’Shvat, the Jewish “New Year of the Trees.” Created by the Jewish mystics of Sefat, this holiday celebrates natural and supernatural renewal, and includes a special “seder” modeled on the Passover seder. The book also includes a history of the festival from its beginnings as a special tax day, through the Middle Ages and into the contemporary period, where it has become the major “ecological” holiday of Judaism.


Following the outline of the travels of Abraham and Moses as well as of the stories of David and Solomon, the Prophets, and the New Testament, Farb provides the geological, biological, and anthropological information of areas illustrated in these stories. He draws on archeological explorations, ancient trade knowledge and practices, and traditional medicine, and introduces a map of the Holy Land based on the probable route of the Exodus journey. The book contains illustrations of the geography, plants, animals, birds, and insects found during this historical period and includes a list of suggested reading for more detailed coverage (note that these references are dated no later than 1965).


This book surveys the *realia* of the plant, animal, and agricultural world mentioned in the Bible, making reference to and seeking clarification from the Mishnah, the Midrash, and the Talmud as well as parables, similes, and metaphors drawn from the realm of agriculture. After a general overview of creation, evolution, ecology, and genetics, Feliks moves through the Hebrew Bible citing passages and expressions which mention plants and animals and provides his speculations and conclusions on which particular species is most likely being represented.


Flores and Taber clarify that ethical conduct in science has not been traditionally seen as arising from the discipline of science itself, but rather was considered a character deficiency on the part of the individual scientist. This bibliography, however, focuses on works that address scientific and technological developments that have raised important ethical problems for the discipline of science (e.g., recombinant DNA research, biomedical research, genetic engineering, behavior modification and control, human sexuality, nuclear energy, computers, supersonic transports, pesticides, and weapons research—including chemical and biological warfare). Descriptive and slightly critical annotations provide insight into the bibliographical references that offer solutions, models for developing solutions, or critical evaluations of the problems.
The papers comprising this volume were originally presented at the Institute for Judaism and Contemporary Thought in Israel (1971). Written with the understanding that “Judaism” and “contemporary thought” are not mutually exclusive, the book begins with a discussion on the importance of methodology as an instrument of both intellectual honesty and spiritual survival. Part two examines Halakhah (the legal basis of ethics) while part three focuses on its philosophical foundations (e.g., ideology, idealism, and moral objectivity). Part four specifically analyzes contemporary concerns such as the dynamics of power, morality in war, religion, and morality. The contributing authors seek to build a bridge between Jewish ethics and contemporary thought.


Freudenstein begins by introducing the traditional understanding of bal tashhit (e.g., forbidding purposeless destruction), a concept that was limited to wartime as is stated in Deut. 20:19–20. He demonstrates that this fundamental Jewish principle is also valid in extraordinary times and that pollution abatement, sewage disposal, and the protection of animal species, plants, and mineral resources are all addressed under the law of bal tashhit. He examines the concept of a green belt around cities that is found in Lev. 25:34 andNumbers 35 as well as the concept of “nature” found in the Psalms and among the prophetic books. He concludes by arguing that this human misunderstanding of a three-and-a-half-thousand year old tradition has contributed to ecological devastation.


Freundel, Barry. “The Earth is the Lord’s.” *Jewish Action* 50, no. 3 (summer 1990): 22–26. Uncomfortable with the current environmental movement, Freundel demonstrates how it began as both a critique of the Torah and a return to paganism. He describes the Torah’s ecological agenda as responsible use mixed with sincere concern, progress with restraint, and growth and technology with intent to conserve and preserve. Freundel discusses the commandment of bal tashchit (do not destroy), the halachic tradition’s concern with the general environmental quality of life (e.g., noise pollution, air pollution, animal well-being, grazing patterns, “green belts,” special environmental legislation for Jerusalem), and God’s covenant with the Earth. He draws on two rabbinic stories illustrating Judaism’s intrinsic concern with the human treatment of God’s world from examples drawn from mystical literature (e.g., the Kabbalah, the Baal Shem Tov, and Rabbi Nachman). His conclusion offers suggestions as to how Judaism can contribute to and shape the environmental movement.


Gaster provides a modern interpretive guide to the what, why, and how of festivals, fasts, and holy days. After a short introduction to the basics of Judaism, he examines the seasonal festivals, solemn days, day of sorrow, minor holidays, and the Sabbath. Utilizing a comparative method, he traces each festival’s evolution to pre-biblical times, suggests that these are times when Heaven and earth meet, and emphasizes that Jewish festivals are living experiences—not merely celebrations—of collective institutions. He includes hymns, liturgical poetry, prayers, and biblical passages as well as a chapter on the New Year for trees and the four “natural” new years.


This book examines the interaction between Judaism and nature. More specifically, how Judaism interacts with modern environmentalism. It examines how Jewish literature including the Bible, Talmud, Midrash literature and Responsa affect the Jewish relationship with nature in dealing with the use of natural resources, animals, pollution and the allocation of space.


Making reference to Lynn White, Jr. ["The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis"], Gerstenfeld concedes that he may be correct about Christianity, but not about Judaism. Gerstenfeld critiques the deep ecology movement, and the Harvard Divinity School religion and ecology conference series as an "upgrading of paganism," neo-paganism, and, what he calls, contemporary manifestations of idolatry. He warns against the religious focus on nature by neo-pagans and the ideological focus held by extreme environmentalists. Emphasizing that nature is not sacred in and of itself, Gerstenfeld cautions against molding classical Judaism into a contemporary secular agenda that advocates an upholding of the Noahide laws and commandments (in contrast to natural laws which he perceives as cruel) that are applicable to all of humanity.


Claiming that garbage is a function of wealth, Gershfield remembers his zaida who made a living collecting material for the collection center (then called a junkyard) and who would be known today as an "ecologist" instead of a junk peddler. Upholding the old principle of "thrift," Gershfield warns against the zealousness of contemporary environmentalists, their crusading spirit, and their ability to turn environmental issues into fetishes. He also cautions against the motivation of environmentalists who seek to ease their conscience and exert power over others.

Gendler asks where one receives the inspiration of God, in nature or through religious history? He quotes a significant number of biblical passages in order to illustrate the role nature plays in religious faith and utilizes these passages not only to highlight the significance of nature, but also to connect them to environmentally destructive behavior. Gendler examines the term brit (covenant) and, although it is generally used in terms of circumsicion, Gendler argues that the term first occurs in the Hebrew Bible in relation to all life on the planet. He concludes that the divine covenant is with the planet and that the path to redemption is through creation, not around it.

Gendler remarks on how poetry, his travels in Mexico, and his attendance at seminary have helped him to define his environmental awareness. He demonstrates, through his examination of textual evidence from Talmudic times and a sixteenth-century code of Jewish Law, that contemporary institutional alienation from nature is not historically supported. Utilizing quotations from William Blake, Saul Tchernichovsky, D. H. Lawrence, and Mircea Eliade, Gendler is an advocate for a more inclusive religious symbology. In his concluding argument, Gendler refutes the claim that Judaism is by nature a monolithic and normative tradition and denies that certain notions are inauthentic solely because they seem distant from institutionalized Judaism.


Gendler asks where one receives the inspiration of God, in nature or through religious history? He quotes a significant number of biblical passages in order to illustrate the role nature plays in religious faith and utilizes these passages not only to highlight the significance of nature, but also to connect them to environmentally destructive behavior. Gendler examines the term brit (covenant) and, although it is generally used in terms of circumsicion, Gendler argues that the term first occurs in the Hebrew Bible in relation to all life on the planet. He concludes that the divine covenant is with the planet and that the path to redemption is through creation, not around it.

Gendler argues that the term first occurs in the Hebrew Bible in relation to all life on the planet. He concludes that the divine covenant is with the planet and that the path to redemption is through creation, not around it.

Gendler remarks on how poetry, his travels in Mexico, and his attendance at seminary have helped him to define his environmental awareness. He demonstrates, through his examination of textual evidence from Talmudic times and a sixteenth-century code of Jewish Law, that contemporary institutional alienation from nature is not historically supported. Utilizing quotations from William Blake, Saul Tchernichovsky, D. H. Lawrence, and Mircea Eliade, Gendler is an advocate for a more inclusive religious symbology. In his concluding argument, Gendler refutes the claim that Judaism is by nature a monolithic and normative tradition and denies that certain notions are inauthentic solely because they seem distant from institutionalized Judaism.


Gendler argues that the term first occurs in the Hebrew Bible in relation to all life on the planet. He concludes that the divine covenant is with the planet and that the path to redemption is through creation, not around it.

Gendler remarks on how poetry, his travels in Mexico, and his attendance at seminary have helped him to define his environmental awareness. He demonstrates, through his examination of textual evidence from Talmudic times and a sixteenth-century code of Jewish Law, that contemporary institutional alienation from nature is not historically supported. Utilizing quotations from William Blake, Saul Tchernichovsky, D. H. Lawrence, and Mircea Eliade, Gendler is an advocate for a more inclusive religious symbology. In his concluding argument, Gendler refutes the claim that Judaism is by nature a monolithic and normative tradition and denies that certain notions are inauthentic solely because they seem distant from institutionalized Judaism.


Gendler argues that the term first occurs in the Hebrew Bible in relation to all life on the planet. He concludes that the divine covenant is with the planet and that the path to redemption is through creation, not around it.

Gendler remarks on how poetry, his travels in Mexico, and his attendance at seminary have helped him to define his environmental awareness. He demonstrates, through his examination of textual evidence from Talmudic times and a sixteenth-century code of Jewish Law, that contemporary institutional alienation from nature is not historically supported. Utilizing quotations from William Blake, Saul Tchernichovsky, D. H. Lawrence, and Mircea Eliade, Gendler is an advocate for a more inclusive religious symbology. In his concluding argument, Gendler refutes the claim that Judaism is by nature a monolithic and normative tradition and denies that certain notions are inauthentic solely because they seem distant from institutionalized Judaism.


Gilbert traces the world-wide migrations of Jews from ancient Mesopotamia to modern Israel. Providing a history of the Jews through the medium of cartography, he includes maps of traders, philosophers, financiers, settlers, and sages as well as those that illustrate the persecutions, expulsions, torture, humiliation, and mass murder of those who traveled these routes. Anecdotal captions accompany each map and Gilbert includes an index categorized by certain themes (e.g., Jewish military activity, massacres, Jewish Kingdoms) countries, cities, and people. His bibliography includes works from the Biblical and Classical to the medieval and modern periods. Cartography by Arthur Banks.


Goldman explores two broad categories, the religious and the secular. Commending Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Lecomte du Nouy, and E. W. Sinnott in their attempts to synthesize the two, Goldman prefers to outline the dilemmas faced by the secularist (e.g., Western ethics and morals are upheld by Jewish and Christian thinking based on revelation) and to highlight the integrity of the religious scientist (e.g., in a genuine interest to study God’s handiwork, they are uninterested in forcing their observations to fit theories, but rather more interested in uncovering what it is). He asks if nature is amoral, tries to develop a naturalistic ethic, discusses secular humanists and evolutionists (e.g., Bentley Glass, Gaylord Simpson, and Julian Huxley) and demonstrates the gaps, interpretive methodology, and fragmentary evidence that supports evolution.


After establishing the scholarly acceptance of the authenticity of the two God Speeches in the Book of Job, Gordis comments on their literary and stylistic differences in addition to Job’s two responses. Suggesting that the universe is not anthropocentric, but rather theocentric, Gordis finds, in Job 40:15, an ecological and theological implication that humans have no inherent right to abuse or exploit living creatures. Gordis draws on modern literary theory and psychological research in order to demonstrate that the speeches are not about nature, but about nature’s transcendent God. He concludes that the Speeches of the Lord, prior to secular ethics, offered a foundation for the inherent rights of animals as co-habitants of earth.

________. “A Basis for Morals: Ethics in a Technological Age.” *Judaism* 25, no. 1 (1976): 20–43. Seeing moral disintegration as the fundamental crisis of the contemporary age, Gordis asserts that there can no longer be a dogmatic basis for ethics as is found in the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition. He discounts science as a rationale for ethics as it
does not have the capacity to treat human equality, personal freedom, social justice, etc. However, Gordis does discuss the place of technology and the contribution of science to topics such as ethics and natural law. Providing more details on the Jewish scriptural sources for natural law, the nature of humankind, humankind’s relationship to society and the environment, the prophetic philosophy of history, and the shape of the future, Gordis upholds the cosmic framework of Jewish ethical consciousness and looks more closely at cruelty to animals, conservation of natural resources, and the book of Job as an ecological ethic. Gordis cites the prophets when he asserts that moral law is binding upon all nations and concludes by asking that justice and freedom be realized together.


While Protestant theologians have accepted, through their interpretation of Gen. 1:28, that their tradition has sanctioned environmental dominion and human destruction of the environment, Gordis argues that the Jewish tradition has never invoked this passage in relation to human treatment the environment. With an expressed affection for the “details” of Judaism, Gordis examines tza-ar ba-alei chayim (the pain of living creatures) and bal tashchit (do not destroy) and highlights the ethical and practical sensitivity of Judaism in his discussion of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. He concludes by emphatically disagreeing with the notion that the Hebrew Bible provides justification for the exploitation of the environment.


Gottlieb provides the reader with many illustrative quotations and passages in order to demonstrate traditional religious perspectives on nature and explain how contemporary theologians and religious institutions are responding to the ecological crisis. Selections are chosen from prominent nature writers, religious authorities, and scholars on the subjects of ecotheology, ecofeminist spirituality, nature and spirit, and religious practice. Suggested readings and contact organizations are also listed in the book’s appendices.


The author of this article examines the recent resurgence in interest in Kabbalah and suggests that, though this “new” Kabbalah is different from the traditional, its insistence upon the relationship between God and the universe as “deep structure and surface” may offer an environmentally friendly vision of Kabbalah. Working with a Kabalistic reading of the Genesis 1 creation myth, with an eye toward how it might speak to us today, the author suggests that this tale of “How the Many proceed from the One” re-inserts humanity into the overall process of cosmic movement.


The author examines the similarities and differences in the Reform return to kashrut. He argues, “The classic Reform valorization of ethics, personal autonomy, and rationality … are now reshaping a positive Reform understanding of the
dietary laws.” He examines closely the “vegetarian-kashrut option” in relationship to the historical development of dietary laws and to the contemporary Judaism and Ecology movement.


________. Tree and Shrub in Our Biblical Heritage. Kiryat Ono, Israel: Neot Kedumim, 1984. Hareuveni provides an ethnobotanical journey through the land of Israel in order to explore the relationship between nature, landscape, and the Jewish tradition. He includes a map of the Neot Kedumim Biblical Landscape Preserve in Israel as well as information on a relatively small number of trees and shrubs found in Israel, their descriptions, uses, and didactic role in Jewish tradition. The book is replete with photographs and quotations from the Hebrew Bible and Talmud.

________. Nature in Our Biblical Heritage. Kiryat Ono, Israel: Neot Kedumim, 1980. By including many photographs, illustrations, and passages from the Hebrew Bible and Talmud, Hareuveni hopes to demonstrate how the land of Israel is a part of the essence of the Jewish people. He examines three festival celebrations (Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot) that celebrate the vitality and resilience of the land and of Israel and through them shows how the land of Israel is woven into Jewish tradition.


Harris, Monford. “Ecology: A Covenental Approach.” CCAR Journal 23, no. 3 (1976): 101–108. Locating the problem of ecology in the self-understanding of Western society, Harris explores the history of Hellenic and Hebraic thought on the relationship between humans and nature and concludes with a modern Jewish perspective (Martin Buber). Harris asserts that Gnosticism and its influence in modern times maintains a conceptual separation between humans and nature. He offers the Jewish paradigm of covenant that affirms both the reality of the relationship between Israel and God and between the Israelites and nature. Finally, by drawing on the distinction between the I-It world of experience and the I-Thou world of relationship put forward by Martin Buber, Harris is able to explain ancient Jewish thought in a modern context.


________. God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1955. Emphasizing that the central notion in Judaism is “the living God,” Heschel discusses the bias of philosophy and biblical methodology in their resistance to the idea of revelation and comments on a “religious behaviorism” that emphasizes external compliance with the law but disregards inner devotion. The book is divided into three very general categories of God,
Revelation, and Response and is meticulously detailed in its study of philosophy, ontology, wonder, commitment, love, faith and science, mitsvah, sin, and the spirit of the Philosophy of Judaism.

Heschel demonstrates the interrelatedness of time and space in terms of the biblical Sabbath and explains how holiness came first in time and later in special dimensions (e.g., the Tabernacle). Referring to the Sabbath as the “great cathedrals” or the “architecture of time,” Heschel notes that time has become a measuring device rather than a realm in which one dwells. He discusses “technical civilization” in association with the biblical passages of “subduing” and “dominion,” and illustrates humanity’s efforts to conquer space and sanctify time. Heschel concludes by describing time as the presence of God in the world of space and explains that ultimately it is in time that one is to perceive the unity of all beings.


Issacs, Ronald H. The Jewish Sourcebook on the Environment and Ecology. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998. Featuring material drawn from both classical and contemporary sources, The Jewish Sourcebook on the Environment and Ecology is a collection of wisdom contained in Jewish tradition concerning nature and its preservation. Judaism’s teachings on ecology and the environment have always assumed that humans are the guardians rather than the masters of creation. As caretakers of nature, it is our responsibility to preserve and guard it from damage and destruction. This sourcebook suggests that Judaism affirms without reservation that the world is God’s creation and that whoever helps to preserve it is doing God’s work.


Katz writes as a secular environmental philosopher hoping to enter into discussion with others who have taken a Jewish law and tradition perspective. As a result of recent work (1995) on the Holocaust in Poland and the Czech Republic, Katz analyzes genocide and ecocide in terms of domination. After observing the landscape of a Holocaust cemetery that prevented him from bearing witness to the whole evil that had taken place there and after having reflected on the Reich’s dream of an agricultural, tree-planting Utopia, Katz sees Judaism as having placed a moral philosophy and ethical order on an amoral natural reality. Connecting anthropocentrism to the practice of domination, Katz finds anthropocentric ideologies upholding the modern environmental movement, theories of ecological restoration, and the Jewish conception of the proper relationship to nature. Katz concludes by arguing that human beings must preserve the free and autonomous development of individuals, communities, and natural systems.


Viewing nature as neither an abstraction nor an ideal, Katz recalls the book of Job and its message that the world is beyond the control and human understanding. He distinguishes between ownership and stewardship (Gen. 1:28) in order to emphasize Judaism’s theocentric worldview and finds a Jewish environmentalism embedded in the observances of the Sabbath and other rituals and commandments. Katz analyzes the works of Norman Lamm, Robert Gordis, and Eric G. Freudenstein and discusses concerns relating to animal well-being such as the concept of bal tashchit (do not destroy) found in Deut. 20:19–20 and rabbinic extensions of the law. In his concluding argument, Katz states that nature has a value independent of human interests in the Jewish tradition and adds that nature demonstrates the creative power of God.


Responding to a growing sentiment in philosophy that it must be “applied,” Katz illustrates his notion of practicality by choosing a variety of books, anthologies, and articles in the field of environmental ethics including the most important selections from the *Journal of Environmental Ethics* itself. Concentrating on the philosophical literature of environmental ethics, the bibliography does not include literature on animal rights. He does include a list of controversial dualities that are central to many environmental debates. He attempts to be objective in his annotations and indicates where his subjective opinion does appear.

Kay attempts to get past the deadlocked “Lynn White debate” by engaging a literary reading of the Bible in terms of its own Iron Age, Near Eastern perspective, but agrees with those who see no biblical basis for environmental destruction. Examining the Bible’s anthropomorphic depictions of plants and animals and their relationship to humans, she argues that the central biblical teaching about nature is its assistance in (and suffering from) God’s punishment of humans. Kay argues that even though Israel rejected the worship of nature itself, its own religion is life- and nature-oriented in many ways.


Understanding Halakah as including not only religious and ritual law, but also civil, criminal, and moral law, Kellner asks if there can be a Jewish ethics outside of Halakah. He divides the literature into four categories (biblical, rabbinic, medieval, and modern) and points to what he considers the most important ethical doctrine in the Hebrew Bible, imitatio Dei, emphasizing it as a practical and moral doctrine rather than a metaphysical doctrine. Referencing the works of Rabbi Akiba and Ben Azzai, Kellner also examines the Lev. 19:18 phrase, “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” He closes by upholding the wisdom of the disagreements within Jewish theology after having discussed pietist ethical literature, Kabbalistic literature, and the view of those who believe Jewish ethics is essentially autonomous in the Kantian sense. Religion and ethics are also discussed.


In this special issue of Tikkun, activists, novelists, academics, spiritual leaders, pop stars and others were asked to reflect on how we might live better into the new millennium. The "Prophetic Vision of the New Millennium" included reflection on aspects of life, such as: spirit, society, environment, culture, identity, and rights. Contributors include, Elizabeth Lesser, Tony Campolo, Matthew Fox, Jim Wallis, David Korten, Thandeka, Fritof Capra, Barbara Streisand, Carl Pope, Riane Eisler, Susan Faludi, and Gerald Shapiro.


Providing thorough footnotes and biblical citations, McKenzie begins this article by arguing that the term “nature” signifies the material universe and is also an expression of the will of God. He addresses various conceptions of nature held in ancient Near Eastern religions, Hebrew thought, and modern philosophy and science, and examines Yahweh as creator, Lord of the storm, and the dispenser of fertility. McKenzie includes a semantic analysis of the two creation accounts and a comparative analysis of Old Testament creation and chaos theory and Babylonian mythology. Other topics include: the order and wisdom of nature, storm theophany, the theophany of Elijah, the “sacramental” character of nature, the extraordinary phenomena of nature, miracles in the Bible, thaumaturgy, modern attitudes toward the marvelous, divine activity in nature, and the eschatological consummation of nature.


The divisions of “Primary” and “Secondary Sources” in their previous bibliography (1973–1974) have been updated to “Primary” and “Supplementary Sources,” the latter of which collects literature of critical, but not explicit, relevance to the philosophy of technology. This book contains an analytic table of contents of primary sources and divides the supplemental literature into twenty-seven categories including: philosophy of nature, religion and technology, alternative technology, environmental issues, technology transfer, third world development, and social aspects of technological change.


Noting that every bibliography reflects the characteristic theory of its material, Mitcham and Grote reference the fields of history of technology, philosophy of science, industrial sociology, science policy, bioethics, cybernetics, artificial intelligence, and art in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive structure of technology. The book includes references to: philosophical works; ethical, political, and religious critiques (with Soviet and East European materials); metaphysical and epistemological studies; and various textbooks. It makes note of all the philosophical analyses of technology in major Western languages (mostly in English) but does not include reviews of those books.


Murray offers a fresh reading of the Bible in order to add to the already developed “ecological theology” derived from biblical exegesis and systematic theology. He addresses the dominion argument in Genesis, the views of Reformed theology, Catholicism’s relationship with “natural theology,” and related notions in evangelical theology. Murray emphasizes the wide semantic field of notions in Hebrew (e.g., cosmic and social order as well as peace) and discovers that the message of salvation, not history, is primary in the Biblical text. He advocates a reintegration of the wider order of things by emphasizing how humans have basic human “needs” (as opposed to “rights”) that bind us together in a network of duties.


Establishing that covenant should be understood as a relationship—particularly with God (e.g., between parties of unequal power)—and not mistakenly likened to inter-human relationships, Newman proceeds to further distinguish between covenant and contract, a term that she understands as secular—although the term has been influenced by Christian understandings of covenant that suggest free participation. She asserts that whereas a contract is conditional, a covenant is not because it may only be violated, never broken. Drawing on the fluidity of the relationship with God found in Deut. 10:12–13, Newman discusses the implications of a Jewish covenantal theology for Jewish ethics. Conceding that there needs to be some conceptual clarification on the meaning of covenant within the Jewish tradition itself, Newman asserts that a system of ethics emerges precisely from one’s views on this covenantal relationship.


Challenging contemporary models of textual interpretation for Jewish ethics, Newman presents her alternative by drawing on literary and legal theorists. Utilizing euthanasia as an example, she suggests semantic, methodological, and conceptual adjustments that would prevent reading contemporary ethics into the past with simple associations between what past authorities would have said if they had been faced with modern day problems. Ultimately Newman seeks a dialectical relationship between moral principles with a precedent in Jewish literature and contemporary contexts, similar to the discipline of halakha (jurisprudence).


According to Newsom, Job’s contemplation of the divine activity portrayed in God’s speech from the whirlwind transforms his moral world and his moral imagination. Those speeches present an alternative to the patriarchal, hierarchical, paternalistic moral order of Job’s culture; they present a Kohak (moral sense of nature), a vision of a non-hierarchical order of rightness in which all things, including humans, have their place, purpose, and limit.


Pollard outlines five different readings of the Book of Genesis that range from Genesis being the root of environmental destruction to it being completely irrelevant for environmental instruction. Supported by recent scholarship in theology, politics, culture, and other technological innovations at the time of the compilation of Genesis, the article draws attention to the terminology of “subdue” and “dominion” and its relevance to the greater Israelite task of spreading monotheism. He concludes by stating that Judaism had to de-sanctify nature while, in light of revelation, it was also required to remain ethically related to it.


This article provides a basic description of the Jewish ethic toward nature, including those ideals incumbent on all people, not only Jews, as prescribed in the Noahide covenant. Prosnit discusses the jubilee, or sabbatical year for Jews, by demonstrating how land is God’s property to be utilized by all people, and, although this practice was never implemented, it has defined the theology of ownership and the earth. Drawing a contemporary parallel with developing nations who are asked to forfeit their first taste of economic security for some distant ecological benefit, he raises the issue of redistributing God’s resources to the poor and needy, and urges hope, tikun olam (repairing the world), and bal taschit (not wasting).


This section of the book includes three chapters, the first is on the Hebrew conception of nature. After briefly summarizing the Babylonian and Canaanite mythologies that underlie much of Israelite religion, Robinson examines the Song of Songs, the Wisdom literature, the Book of Job, and the Psalms, and engages in some comparative work with Islam, Vedanta, and Rudolf Otto’s notion of the numinous. In the chapter entitled, “Creation, Conservation, and Transformation,” Robinson addresses the two creation stories, creation *ex nihilo*, and anthropomorphism, the dependence of Nature on God, and prophecy. Chapter three examines nature-miracles (e.g., signs, portents, and wonders) of the Old Testament as well as the prophetic interpretation of Nature and history (e.g., Crossing the Red Sea). Robinson’s concluding argument reveals that: Nature is alive, in quasi-conscious sympathy with man; that life is sustained by God; and that nature reveals God in several ways: 1) as the unique utterance of a unique being, 2) as the arena of history, and 3) as being wholly dependent on God.


This volume includes essays presented by various scholars at an international/interfaith conference held at Middlebury College (Vermont). The introduction briefly recounts the history of environmental concern in the United States, especially in relation to religion and the emergence of an international environmental ethic. Chapters reflect a variety of faith traditions including: Jewish (Ismar McFague), liberal democratic (J. Ronald Engel), Islam (Seyyed Hossein Nasr), and Tibetan Buddhism (Dalai Lama). Other chapters include overviews of the World Conservation Strategy (Robert Prescott-Allen), the historical and contemporary contours of the relationship between religion and ecology (Stephen Rockefeller), and a dialogue among the participants. The epilogue comments on images from the conference's art exhibition (John C. Elder) while an appendix provides the text of the United Nations World Charter for Nature.


In response to the popular scholarly warning not to retroject modern conceptions of nature onto the writers of the Old Testament, Rogerson offers a counter warning to not mistakenly assume the conception is so different. Maintaining that the difference between Old Testament and modern experiences of nature has been exaggerated by scholars, Rogerson suggests that perhaps the difference lay only in its expression. He illustrates a framework of five specific questions relating to various definitions of terms (e.g., of nature, miracles, modern); explains the Hebrew understanding of these terms; examines various cultural reactions (e.g., Israelite) to these terms; explores various anthropological methodologies; and suggests a better method of inquiry into the study of Old Testament texts. His concluding argument proposes that Old Testament claims to the sovereignty of God over nature were based more on faith than on a specific thought process or viewpoint.


This dissertation will engage multiple fall narratives as they develop in ancient traditions and currently emerge in theological and ecological circles. The deconstructive approach to theological constructions of “fallen nature” are guided by ecofeminist criticism of its earth-degrading and death-denying aspects, particularly the conflations between sin and death. Five major categories of falleness arise in this examination. First, the fall into nature—the ancient fall from heavenly immortality to earthly mortality, a story proposed by the fallen angel traditions of the intertestamental period (chap.2); second, the fallen nature — the fall into a mortally and morally cursed earth from an Edenic human immortality and/or dominion, a narrative appearing in first century Jewish narratives, the orthodox Christian doctrine of the fall and, the later Baconian scientific literalization of dominion (chaps. 2,3,4); third, the ecofall from nature—the human fall from ecological harmony into sinful objectification/alienation from nature, a view of history outlined in contemporary ecofall traditions (chaps. 4,5); fourth, the falling nature—the deciusious, decaying, predatory, entropic and inevitably tragic nature of nature, a perspective spanning from ancient Judaism into contemporary science (chaps. 2, 5); and fifth, the fall from union —the melancholic and often tragic relational separation from others inevitable to creaturely existence, a philosophy proposed by contemporary psychoanalytic discourse (chap. 5).


Schochet focuses more on the place of the animal kingdom in biblical and postbiblical thought than on individual fauna. He cautions scholars not to read contemporary ideology and understanding into the biblical and mishnaic eras. He also examines traditional animal lore and legend, legal enactments, the role of the animal in Jewish thought and experience, and the concept of tzaar baalei hayyim (practice of kindness to animals and prohibiting pain). Framed within a hierarchical cosmology, the author explains that humankind and their relationships with each other occupy center stage for most rabbinic and postrabbinic writers and that wild animals often do not concern them nor do they carry social or religious obligations.


Schwartz begins by stating that the Jewish tradition is more ambivalent about the environment than many Jewish environmentalists would feel comfortable with. He warns against interpreting Judaism in conformity with the cultural norms and already articulated environmental perspectives and advocates for a strong Jewish understanding of theology, philosophy, and morality in order to offer uniquely Jewish solutions to counter the destructive attitudes toward nature. Schwartz examines the Jewish relationship with paganism by discussing the different and paradoxical approaches of the Hasidim and Mitnagdim—the former who came close to making the world into the sacred, and the latter who nearly removed the Divine presence from the world altogether. After discussing the moral implications of the theological conflict with paganism, Schwartz also reevaluates the material/spiritual relationship in Judaism.


Supported by outdated statistics and a basic theology, Schwartz includes topics on: ecology and vegetarianism, peace, feeding the hungry, global hunger, and the Jewish Halakha. He complements by addressing common questions about vegetarianism and by including a survey of famous Jewish vegetarians, the names and addresses of vegetarian groups, and a short annotated bibliography on the subject. Specifically mentioning the biblical mandate of tsa'ar ba'alei chayim in order to illustrate Jewish compassion, Schwartz utilizes historical texts and contemporary examples of the treatment of animals in order to demonstrate how vegetarianism is consistent with Jewish tradition—a tradition that is incumbent upon all Jews.


This article traces the re-construction of Judaism according to the reigning science of four different periods in Western Civilization: Ancient Greece, the Medieval re-discovery of Aristotelianism, the Scientific Revolution (Galileo, Copernicus, and Darwin), and contemporary post-Einsteinian science. In each period, it discusses how concepts of God and creation have changed to reflect the scientific view of the world.


Solomon addresses the stewardship (or domination) question found in Genesis, notions regarding hierarchy in creation, concerns regarding the treatment of animals (e.g., causing animals pain or distress, eating meat, and hunting practices). He then explores the Jewish paradigm of land and people, sabbatical and Jubilee years, the removal of fruit trees, limitations on grazing rights, agricultural festivals, environmental laws on waste disposal, atmospheric pollution, water pollution, noise, etc. In the area of ethics, Solomon carefully analyzes animal life and human life, procreation and population control, and the use of energy (e.g., fossil fuel, nuclear, and solar energy). He concludes by outlining the implications of the relationship between religion and conservation (e.g., discouraging the pursuit of personal wealth, biodiversity as a “testimony to God,” laws regulating people and the land, desisting from ideological conflicts, and discerning between technological and value judgments).


Steinmetz makes a point-by-point comparative analysis of the differences found in the three human beginnings: Adam and Eve’s consumption of the forbidden fruit, Cain’s murder of Abel, and Noah’s violation of the covenant. She provides a summary of the parallels in a chart while noting that there is an growing dissociation between the actions of human beings and the fate of the earth and that with each story there is a steady increase in human autonomy. Steinmetz demonstrates how humankind becomes more responsible for its actions (as a result of its potential for evil) and examines God and human autonomy as well as knowledge in all three stories. Her concluding argument reveals that each story sets up new relationships between human beings, nature, God, and human society.


Seeking the understanding of the ancients’ metaphors with a modern sophistication, Swartz provides a thorough reference with textual citations and passages from the Bible, Talmud, Zohar, and various philosophers. He explores the era of mishnah and talmud, the urbanization of Jews from the Middle Ages and Renaissance through the rise of modernity until the present. Highlighting prominent individuals’ thoughts in each section, Swartz develops guiding principles informed by the Jewish tradition for contemporary social and environmental action in sections discussing *Halacha* and fate; God’s ownership and the terms of humankind’s lease; the unity of Creation, inescapable consequences, and future generations; and *tzedek, tzedek tirdof* (the pursuit of seamless justice). Stewardship and covenantal trust, communal responsibilities versus individual rights, societal goals, and Sabbath peace are also explored.


This article provides a brief overview of the history of the Zionist Jewish National Fund. The author argues that the fund has progressed beyond its original “development” plan and has transformed itself into a powerful environmental organization promoting “sustainable development.” The author calls on progressive Jews to become an ally of the JNF’s environmental efforts and argues that by doing so the JNF will become a powerful meeting point between Zionists and progressives.


This collection of essays brings together Jewish and Christian thinkers to reflect on a Torah / Biblically based approach to environmental issues. The overall goal is to find a way between human dominion language, on the one hand and radical immanence on the other. The author’s suggest that a theo-centric approach is more true to scripture than an anthropocentric or ecocentric approach. The book also includes a copy of the “Cornwall Declaration” which emerged from the same conference as these essays.


Toperoff describes the significant presence of animals in the Jewish tradition in his lengthy introduction that addresses such topics as: the Sabbath, festivals, animal welfare, the synagogue, art, names, veterinary surgery, post-talmudic literature, and the Perek Shirah. Drawing from sources such as the Bible, Midrash, Talmud, and the Zohar, Toperoff provides detailed chapters documenting sixty-four different animals. Each entry is followed by proverbial sayings.


This article explores the relationship between religion and science as providing integrated knowledge about creation and the contemporary environmental crisis. The author argues that ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments provide "cumulative proof" of God (rather than rational) and reliable information about God's creation. The author examines the special role that humans, tzelem Elohim, have in the "Order of Creation." He argues that the concept of tzedek/tzedakah (righteousness, or restoration of order) provides a good source for an environmental ethic and one that works against the 20th Century's way of dealing with the problem over over-population, viz. triage: incarceration, expulsion, and extermination, whether through direct or indirect policies.


Though there is no word for ecology in the bible, the author argues that the biblical texts do contain rich ideas about the relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world. In particular, this article reflects on the passage in Deuteronomy 20:19-20, which forbids the destruction of trees in besieged cities. This command was extended in rabbinic exegesis to the concept prohibiting wastefulness, bal tashhit. The author examines both the biocentric and anthropocentric environmental ethic derived from this text/concept.


From Abstract: In this dissertation, a particular pedagogical moment is examined to discover how religious education might be shaped by ecologically aware practices. After examining the charges that Christianity and Judaism are inherently against the health of the world, the dissertation proceeds with interdisciplinary review of wilderness philosophy, theological anthropology, and progressive education. The contingent character of knowing within these theoretical areas sets the stage for a practical pedagogical experiment. In chapter one, investigations in anthropology frame questions about how human beings are perceived, building toward a constructive ecological theological anthropology. Chapter two explores the resources of progressive education for clues as to how education may challenge, sustain, reveal, or renew unexamined commitments of individuals and communities. In chapter three, the concepts of faith, meaning-making, praxis, and practice shape an emerging definition for ecological religious education. Chapter four examines a strategy for ecological religious education through an experiential course in theology and ecology taught with young adults on Sapelo Island, Georgia (1998–2000). Students read theological and ecological texts, worked with a local ecologist, engaged in local narrative and crafts, kayaking, and poetic reflection. Reflection upon narratives arising from the experimental strategy offer insights for the further refinement and construction of a model for ecological religious education.


The author argues that ancient and medieval Jewish texts offer a variety of views of nature and the human place therein. He argues that Judaism does not support either the view that humans are dominant over nature (anthropocentrism) or that humans are simply a part of nature (eco-centrism). Rather, the primary environmental ethic that Judaism has to offer is one of balance: balance between the claims, needs, and values of humans and nature.


Waskow, Arthur. “Shout Rather Than Whisper: A Jewish Renewal Perspective on Reform.” Judaism 53(Summer/Fall 2004): 193-196. This article argues that the Jewish Reform movement needs both a new theology that takes into account the continuous presence of God in the continual becoming of creation and a new halakha, or code of ethics and ritual. This new halakha should include things such as eco-kosher laws, marriage rites for hetero- and homo-sexual couples, requirements for Jewish business leaders to take social and environmental concerns into account, and ritual observance of Tu B’Shvat.

Waskow, Arthur. “Wheat in Eden, Computers in Our Day.” Cross Currents 50.1-2(2000): 258-263. This article draws on the ideas of three books (Ishmael, The Ecology of Eden, and The Book of Miriam) that suggest (in various ways) the Torah records the transitions in spirit and consciousness that take place as humans move from hunter-gatherer, pastoral, to agricultural life-paths. He then draws on this to suggest a hermeneutic for reading Torah and biblical texts as clues to how humans might live better with the rest of creation through the current technological transformation we are experiencing. The author suggests that with this approach, “Torah becomes a tale of the spirals of growing up in power and love of the human race, and also of individual human beings.”

Waskow, Arthur. ed. Torah of the Earth: Exploring 4,000 Years of Ecology in Jewish Thought (2 vols). Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2000. The relationship between Judaism and concern for the environment is exhaustively examined in this comprehensive two-volume anthology. The editor brings together 39 articles written by 32 scholars and experts. The first volume deals with “Biblical Israel and Rabbinic Judaism” while the second is devoted to “Zionism and Eco-Judaism.” The general drift of the essays is that Judaism has a long-standing, mostly-positive link to the earth. Appendices includes a list of eco-Jewish organizations and suggestions for further reading.


Waskow, Arthur. “What Is Eco-Kosher?” in This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb, 297–300. New York: Routledge, 1996. Hoping to transcend differences, Waskow appeals to two types of Jews, those who live by the traditional code and those who do not, with his term “eco-kosher” and its broad meaning of “good practice.” Stating that vegetarianism was viewed as the higher but not compulsory path, Waskow reexamines the content of traditional Jewish precepts and links current ecological problems and issues with traditional moral wisdom. He also discusses shabbat, sexual ethics, and the importance of the shift from biblical to rabbinic Judaism.


Weiss discusses the tension that exists between the dominion of nature and the dominion of spirit within the human being and suggests that there are four types of resolution: nature triumphant (pagan), fragmentation (muses and graces), retreat (ascetic Christianity), and unity (Judaism). After offering a brief explanation of the rabbinic tradition, divine law, and of concepts of nature and miracle in Jewish thought, he proceeds to discuss the topic of immanence in creation within normative Judaism and perspectives on the integration of the divine and the material. Weiss also mentions that values such as the proper treatment of animals and concern for other human beings is elaborated in the Halakhah.


Probably no single article has had such an impact on ecological thought in Christianity as this address by a historian of medieval technology to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. White claims that the source of Western science, technology, and the nature-exploiting attitudes guiding them lies in Christian interpretations of the opening chapter of Genesis. According to White, Christian belief in a human-nature dualism and the divine right of humans to exploit nature gave rise to distinctively Western technology in the Middle Ages. The same belief, White argues, continues to dominate post-Christian society and form the basis of all environmental degradation. The news is not all grim, however, White does see hope in the Christian community through “heretical” figures such as St. Francis, an individual that White sees as creating an alternative view of God’s cosmic humility through the establishment of his democratic view of all creatures.


Whitney criticizes her fellow historian of medieval technology, Lynn White, as well as his “ecotheological” critics. She identifies questionable presuppositions in White’s arguments and challenges his claim that Western religion’s exploitive attitude toward nature caused medieval technological dynamism. She finds that both White and his critics overemphasize the role of religious values in the environmental crisis by failing to take into account how non-religious values (e.g., systems such as economic and political systems) helped to create, reinforce, or implement these beliefs and behaviors.


From Abstract: Since 1964, Christian churches and theologians have examined the role that Christian anti-Judaism played in supporting the antisemitism that led to the Shoah, and have responded by producing positive Christian theologies of Judaism, which reject the “teaching of contempt,” and propose this understanding of the Jewish-Christian relationship: God’s covenant with Israel is ongoing; Jesus is the way into that covenant for Gentiles, and the church is ontologically dependent upon Israel’s election. Analysis of these theologies reveals that they privilege orthodox Jewish voices, hold a model of an electing God, and speak symbolically of Jews as witnesses. What might liberal Jews
add to this conversation? Examination of three liberal Jewish theologians, Eugene Borowitz, Arthur Green and Judith Plaskow, reveals that they have detected a shift in the terms of the Covenant, one which emphasizes human freedom in relationship with God. These liberal Jewish voices are put in conversation with a constructive theological project that proposes Sallie McFague's models of God as mother, lover and friend, and the world as God's body, as responses to the ecological and emancipatory challenges of our time. A fourth model, God as partner, is proposed in response to Christian anti-Judaism, the challenge of religious pluralism and the voices of liberal Jews. This model provides accountability, mutuality, reciprocity, future orientation, communication, and the possibility of multiple partnerships.


Yaffe, Martin D. ed. Judaism and Environmental Ethics: A Reader. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001. This collection of essays brings together various scholars to address the Lynn White critique that the bible is responsible for supporting human dominion and therefore is the site of blame for the environmental crisis. Divided into “historical”, “philosophical” and “ethical” approaches, the essays in this volume are in dialogue on the issue of dominion and reveal a variety and complexity of biblical understandings of the relationship between humans and the environment. Contributors include: Jeremy Benstein, E.L. Allen, Jeanne Kay, Arthur Schaffer, Lawrence Troster, Steven S. Schwarzchild, David Ehrenfeld, and Philip J. Bentley


Bibliography: Copyright © 1999 Center for the Study of World Religions. Reprinted with permission.
Annotations and PDF File: Copyright © 2004 Forum on Religion and Ecology. All rights reserved.