

Environmental Karma

A Jewish Approach
to Ecological Crisis

Why are we in this mess?

- We have reached this moment of ecological crisis not because of morally 'evil' choices, but simply by being very good at survival. Why does God construct a human creature that generates so much garbage?
- Isn't the environmental state we're in just the natural consequence of following God's very first dictum to that very first human pair...

28. And God blessed them {Adam and Eve}, and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth

Genesis 1:28

“Leit Atar Pinuey Minai”

**There is no place or moment
free of His Presence**

- According to the mystical Jewish tradition, the entire world is filled with God, not just all space but all time as well. Thus, every moment, and every event, is an ongoing dialogue between us and God.
- So what is God telling us in the guise of environmental crisis?

The Root of the Problem: Looking Back to Creation

➤ **Bereshit 1:11**

God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation of plants bringing forth seed, trees of fruit yielding fruit after its kind, which have their seed in them, onto the earth." And it was so.

And the earth brought forth vegetation: herbage yielding seed after its kind, and trees making fruit, each containing it seed after its kind.

➤ **Rashi (10th Century Biblical Commentator)**

Trees of fruit. That the flavor of the tree shall be like the flavor of the fruit. But the earth did not do so. Rather the earth brought forth trees *making* fruit, but the tree itself did not taste like the fruit.

The Pinocchio Dilemma



Divine Nudges Back to the Garden

➤ **Malachi 3:5**

And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a **swift witness** against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the orphan, and who turn aside the foreigner from his right, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Small Acts, Global Results

- One has to visualize oneself as equally balanced between righteousness and wickedness, and so too the entire world is also balanced likewise. If one commits just a single destructive act, than the whole world leans towards utter annihilation. However, when one commits a positive act, than the whole world is saved.

(Rambam, Laws of Repentance, Ch. 3)

➤ R. Johanan also said:
The son of David {the
Messiah} will come only
in a generation that is
either altogether
righteous or altogether
wicked.

(Talmud Sanhedrin 98)