



Hebrew Tabernacle: Climate Justice through Tikkun Olam

What is Tikkun Olam?

Well, according to Jewish teachings any activity that improves the world, bringing it closer to the harmonious state for which it was created is Tikkun Olam. It implies that while the world is innately good, its creator left room for us to improve on the creator's work. All human activities are opportunities to fulfill this mission.

How does this relate to "Climate Justice," and what is Hebrew Tabernacle Congregation doing to promote Tikkun Olam?

Right now our world needs our help, we are facing an ever increasing realization that the world on which we all live is suffering. It is our duty as Jews and inhabitants of this planet to do something to bring forth Tikkun Olam. That is why Hebrew Tabernacle will join with the Jewish Climate Action Network of New York City,* one of many partners in Faith 4 Climate Justice (faiths4climatejustice.org), to support the global Faith 4 Climate Justice events on October 17 and 18, 2021.

On 17 October, faith communities will host events where we will unfurl banners calling for climate action, ring our bells, sound gongs and chimes. Then, on 18 October, dressed in our traditional religious clothing, we will line up outside of government buildings, banks and investment houses, delivering our demands in person.

We are calling for: an immediate stop to new fossil fuel projects, deforestation and related financing, a commitment to green jobs, a rapid transition to 100% renewables away from fossil fuels, climate reparations, and investments in frontline communities.

Hebrew Tabernacle is taking steps towards having a greener building by shifting from Freon-based Air Conditioning to a new greener AC technology. This year, the Social Action Committee pledges to educate within our congregation about protecting our environment and fighting against climate change. Specifically, we will use the 2020 Mitzvah Day "Mitzvahs for the

Environment Chart” as a basis for posting each month on our website a page with one concrete way our members and our congregation can reduce (& are reducing) our carbon footprint.

Additionally, The Board of Hebrew Tabernacle endorses the principles set forth from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and this excerpt from the Climate Change resolution at the Union for Reform Judaism Biennial Conference in 2017:

[The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism – Environment & Climate Change](#)

“The Reform Movement is committed to protecting the environment and ensuring a just, healthy, and safe future for generations to come. The science is clear: global climate change and pollution threaten our planet and endanger our communities. We have a sacred responsibility to care for the Earth and its inhabitants by advocating for sustainable policies addressing climate change, promoting clean air and water, and protecting wildlife. In doing this work, we must also ensure environmental justice, protecting those who have been disproportionately impacted by climate change and advocating for a just transition away from fossil fuels. Through our environmental advocacy, we carry on a Jewish tradition of stewardship and partnership in the ongoing work of Creation dating back to Genesis.”

Why Should Jews Care?

The Torah teaches that humankind was created on Earth, in part, to care for and protect God’s creation (Genesis 2:15). The Talmudic concept of bal tashchit, “do not destroy,” was developed by the rabbis as an assertion of God’s holy ownership of the land. We show our commitment to Creation and to each other by preventing the destruction and degradation of our planet. As is said in a powerful Midrash, “Do not destroy My world, for if you do, there will be nobody after you to make it right again.” (Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13). It is our responsibility to preserve, protect, and nourish our planet. We have the power to take action to create a healthy and just future for ourselves and generations to come.”

Resolution on Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change – URJ Biennial 2017

<https://urj.org/what-we-believe/resolutions/resolution-addressing-impacts-climate-change>

In Genesis (9:15-16) God promises not to destroy the earth by flood, stating, “I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every living creature among all flesh, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.” God does not, however, preclude the possibility that humanity, by our own shortsighted behaviors, may destroy the earth by flood or other means. Today, our careless disregard for the environmental impact of our actions has set us on a path that is damaging and could ultimately harm human health and desolate our planet. The devastation wrought by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and by the severe droughts, floods, and wildfires in California and other states and provinces, illustrates the ways in which

climate change, caused in significant part by human behavior, is destroying homes, communities, and human lives.

Therefore, the Union for Reform Judaism Resolves to:

- Encourage congregations to advocate from the local to federal levels of government to uphold or go beyond the commitments of the Paris Climate Agreement;
- Encourage congregations to continue to advocate for legislative, regulatory, and judicial action to protect all communities from the damaging impacts of climate change;
 - Continue to advocate for the U.S. government to uphold our international responsibilities to decrease the human impacts of climate change;
 - Encourage congregations to work with interfaith and other partners within their communities to advocate for and work to implement climate change solutions.

In all these endeavors, we seek and will welcome help and advice from any members who have a passion for and knowledge about climate issues!

For more information reach out to the office at office@hebrewtabernacle.org or call 212-568-8304 and someone from the Social Action Committee will get back to you.



Hebrew Tabernacle
CONGREGATION
AN INCLUSIVE REFORM COMMUNITY