

High Holydays**5768 (2007)**

services with

YACHDAVan egalitarian,
traditional minyanWolfond Centre
for Jewish Campus Life
(36 Harbord St.)

\$72/Adults, \$36/Youth

contact: **416-654-9551** oremail: info@yachdav.cawww.yachdav.ca**THE JEWISH
RESPONSE TO
MISSIONARIES***Jews for
Judaism***905-761-0040**www.jewsforjudaism.org

God created a perfect world that we must care for

By **LEILA SPEISMAN**
Staff Reporter

And God said, "Let us make Mankind in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Genesis, 1:26

"Behold My works, how splendid they are. All that I have created I created for your sake. Do not ruin or destroy my world. For if you do, there is no one to clean it up after you." Kohellet Rabba, 7:13

These two statements, one from the story of creation in the Torah and the other from a midrash about God taking Adam on a tour of the Garden of Eden, show the two sides of the Jewish theological view of the relationship between man, God and the natural world.

On the one hand, God created a beautiful, perfect world and gave it to man, not only to enjoy but also to be in charge of. On the other hand, human beings, God warns, must care for it and make sure that this great gift is not squandered – that it will remain as a legacy for future generations.

While the above quotations speak in generalities, the Torah and commentaries have

a good deal to say about the environment.

Toronto environmental consultant Shai Spetgang said that the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century has made the Earth less susceptible to some of the forces of nature.

For example, as Israel becomes more industrialized, and more land is covered with concrete, less rain can get down to the Earth, and the water table gets contaminated, Spetgang pointed out.

"From a purely selfish perspective, we all want

clean air and water, and to eat non-poisonous food. This is not only for us, but for those who come after," he said.

It behooves us, then, to follow the precepts of the sages, which point us in the right direction, said Spetgang, the manager of membership services and the program development staff person at the Ontario Environment Industry Association and the executive director of the Canadian Environmental Markets Association.

The Messiah will come in time, but in the interim we need to do something about our environmental problems, Spetgang stressed.

Certain issues have surfaced in recent years. There are increased incidences of asthma in children, and people worry about the number of toxins they are exposed to.

Is a tomato infused with fish genes kosher? Some say that it is, since the fish genes bear no similarity to actual fish. The bigger issue, though, is whether we are allowed to manipulate nature.

Continued on page B27

Canadian Technion Society
Israel Institute of Technology**DONATION CARDS AND CERTIFICATES
FOR ALL OCCASIONS**

Cards sold individually or in gift boxes

Phone: **416-789-4545****Canadian Friends of
LANIADO HOSPITAL**

Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital recently celebrated 30 years of Laniado Hospital in Netanya, Israel, with a dinner honoring the memory of Mrs. Hilda Weil, לילי. Laniado Hospital practices the highest standard of medicine coupled with compassion and kindness for all its patients. Help us provide state of the art equipment by supporting Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital. Call 416-785-8946 to place a donation using Visa. Contributions are tax receiptable.

*Judaism is Alive and Well
in Halton Region!***SHAAREI-BETH EL
CONGREGATION**Stephen A. Wise - Rabbi
Ran Salamon - EducatorFor membership and school information:
905-849-6000 • bobbie.sbe@bellnet.ca**We look forward to seeing you!****This wakes up the body.****This wakes up the soul.**Celebrate the High Holidays with Thornhill's most welcoming Shul.
*The Thornhill Community Shul.***ROSH HASHANAH: THURS. - FRI., SEPTEMBER 13 - 14 & YOM KIPPUR: FRI. - SAT., SEPTEMBER 21 - 22**Excellent Children's Programmes for All Ages, Outstanding Chazzanim,
Choice of Four Traditional Services, Compelling & Inspiring Classes
Throughout the Holidays, Inspiring Spiritual Leader - Rabbi Avram RothmanAdults - \$170 / Amazing Youth Program - \$50
Thornhill Community Shul, 949 Clark Avenue WestTo purchase tickets for our Traditional High Holiday Services
call **905.764.1818** or visit aishtoronto.comA Branch of Aish Toronto
**Thornhill
Community Shul**

Community Focus

Halachic sources are adaptable to today's world

Continued from page B26

It is important to note, in this regard, especially since the Human Genome Project deciphered the genetic code, that the manipulation of genes for medical or therapeutic purposes is not, by and large, considered problematic.

While halachic sources do not deal directly with such modern concepts as acid rain and recycling plastic, they are surprisingly adaptable to today's modern world.

The laws of *schchitah*, ritual slaughter, decree that animals must be killed in the most pain-free way possible, with one stroke of a specially sharpened knife by someone skilled in the process.

Canfei Nesharim, an organization of Orthodox Jews dedicated to teaching the importance of protecting the environment from the perspective of Jewish tradition and Halachah, has published a fascinating book, *Compendium of Sources in Halacha and the Environment*, edited by Spetgang and Ora Sheinson. It not only discusses how Judaism views the environment and our responsibilities but also gives extensive background and sources.

Schchitah falls directly in the purview of the laws of *tza'ar ba'alei chaim* – kindness to animals. One must feed one's animals (including pets) before eating oneself; one must not cause them pain; and a hunter must not take a mother animal together with her offspring.

This recognition that animals have rights and needs not only ensures the welfare of the animals, but, the Torah says, several times, that if one observes these rules, "it will be good for you and it will prolong your life." (Devarim, 22:6). Being kind to animals, Halachah says, elevates both your physical and spiritual souls.

Bal Tashchit, the injunction not to waste or destroy, is particularly significant in terms of environmental responsibility.

From Deuteronomy 20:19-20, which says, "When you besiege a city for a long time... you shall not

destroy its trees by forcing an axe against them," we get many rules. We are enjoined to not tear our garments in mourning more than the mandated amount or to destroy things wantonly – either belongings (such as clothes), food or natural resources.

While we wash for ritual purposes (such as before eating bread) or for cleanliness, we should not use more water than required or needed. Use low-flow toilets and taps, take shorter showers and always be conscious of the importance of conserving the world's natural resources.

The coming year is a *shmittah* year in Israel. The land must lie fallow, and what does grow we are not allowed to use. While this is basically a *chok*, that is, a law for which no reason is given, nevertheless it serves the purpose of renewing the health of the soil. Those experienced with farming know that farmers rotate the fields they use so that each year, one is fallow – much the same idea as *shmittah*.

We have a responsibility, say Maimonides, the Mishnah and other codes of law, to not throw stones on a public thoroughfare; to place dead animals, cemeteries and tanneries outside cities, and not the side that the wind comes from; and to work in such a way that dust or ash is carried out away from

other people.

One must not, Maimonides says, soak flax near vegetable patches (the flax will destroy the vegetables) or dispose of dangerous objects where they will possibly hurt others.

There are even such seemingly modern considerations as keeping a greenbelt around a city and refraining from building in the public domain where the structures will obstruct traffic or block sunlight. Builders, the Torah commentator Rashi says, must begin to work immediately after construction materials are brought to the work site.

We must be conscious of both authority and responsibility, Halachah says – to be grateful to God for His goodness and to care for that which His goodness gives us.



Shai Spetgang

Hadassah takes up environment mantle

By JACOB BERKMAN
JTA

Renowned for its work providing state-of-the-art medical care in Israel, Hadassah at its national convention last month focused on keeping people healthy by going green.

The Women's Zionist Organization of America urged the 2,500 members attending its annual assembly in New York to take up simple actions that could help save the environment and stave off global warming – for instance, turning off lights and buying more trees from the Jewish National Fund.

At the Hilton Hotel parley, several sessions on the environment included a talk by Rabbi Lawrence Troster of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life.

"We brought to this convention the opportunity to become an activist on a personal level," convention chairwoman Barbara Spack said.

The organization's national director of advocacy, Shelley Klein, said the convention "was the start of mobilizing our grass-

roots to take this situation seriously."

"We have over 300,000 members in every state and every district, so for us, our strength is our people and our members," Klein said. "For us, the touchstone of our advocacy is our grassroots."

She said the nearly 100-year-old organization used the convention to see if

global warming and the environment resonate with its members. The organization is working on position papers and starting to look at the issue on a policy level, Klein said.

Hadassah is also a partner in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, an effort to

provide education that would improve eight pressing areas by 2015: hunger, primary education, gender equality, child mortality rates, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability and global development.

Klein called the environment a natural fit for Hadassah because of the biblical responsibility to use the earth's resources properly and a reduction in the dependence on oil would benefit Israel.

A reduction in the dependence on oil would benefit Israel

HIGH HOLIDAYS IN ONE HOUR?! The One-Hour High Holiday Happening is dynamic, interactive and meaningful, featuring insights and English readings along with essential Hebrew parts of the service.



ROSH HASHANAH: THURSDAY – FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 – 14
YOM KIPPUR: FRIDAY – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 – 22

New Options for Adults and Families!

Adult One-Hour Happening: Ages 18-120, singles & couples.	Family One-Hour Happening: For Parents with kids up to age 6.
The One-Hour Teen Happening: Ages 12-16	The One-Hour Children's* Happening: Ages 7-11 (*Baby-sitting available for children under 6)
Aish Campus will be having a variety of ongoing classes for young adults 18-29.	

Adults - \$100 / Seniors - \$75 / Children, Teens and Students - \$50
Reena Centre, 927 Clark Avenue West (one building east of Aish)

To purchase tickets call 905.764.1818 or visit aishtoronto.com



Am Shalom Congregation High Holy Day Services 2007

Rabbi Ilyse Glickman
Cantorial Soloist Susan Baskin

Rosh Hashanah

Wed. Sept. 12 8:00 pm
Thurs. Sept. 13
Morning 10:30 am
Children's 3:00 pm
Tashlich 3:30 pm

Yom Kippur

Fri. Sept. 21 8:00 pm
Sat. Sept. 22
Morning 10:30 am
Children's 3:00 pm
Afternoon/Yiskor 3:30 pm

767 Huronia Rd., Barrie, Ont.
(705) 792-3949
www.amshalom.ca

