

The Shul
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October 6, 2018

Bereshit — Shabbat M'vorchim

27 Tishrei, 5779

Jewish Recycling

Let's take a moment to look at recycling. We're not talking about writing on scrap paper for convenience sake. Nor saving the tomato sauce can for the drippings from the meat. We're talking about the check-the-number-on-the-plastic-put-the-used-foil-aside-shred-documents kind of recycling.

In most states in the U.S. and most countries in the world, recycling is not yet mandatory. And even where it is written into city or state ordinances it is not actively enforced. After all, what law enforcement officer wants to go through someone's smelly garbage just to see if the person is throwing out cans or recycling them?

Despite the lack of legislation or enforcement of recycling, many, many people do recycle of their own free will.

Have you ever thought about what kind of a statement you're making every time you put aside a newspaper for recycling, or return a soda can to the store even though you could care less for the nickel?

You're saying, "I have a responsibility to future generations, and I believe that my one small act can make the world a better place."

That's a pretty powerful statement to make by simply tossing a bottle into a recycling bin rather than a garbage bin. And yet, it's so simple that most of us don't even consider its significance.

Now, you're probably wondering if we're "into" recycling, or we're anti-Styrofoam or pro-green. We're none of the above. We're just interested in seeing how meaningful simple, daily acts can be, thus recognizing the higher purpose in everything. And also, of course, how these types of actions relate to basic Jewish concepts.

Jewish philosophy explains that each one of us should look at the world as if it is perfectly balanced. There is an equal number of good and evil deeds. Therefore, one good deed could, quite literally, tip the scale. The magnitude or magnificence of the deed is not at issue. For, if a scale is totally balanced even a feather can shift it - which is not to say that Judaism prefers quantity over quality. Rather, no one should think that they or their action is too insignificant or puny to make a difference.

Here Jewish philosophy and recycling converge. Because the underlying premise in concern for the environment is that despite the fact that billions of tons of glass, plastic, paper and aluminum is not being recycled, I make a difference each time I choose to recycle.

Recycling teaches us, in this instance, to forget about the rest of the world. Forget about the next-door-neighbors who aren't recycling. Forget about the fast-food place that is still using Styrofoam. Forget, even, about the fact that it's becoming harder and harder to find uses for some of the recycled materials. That's not my problem. My responsibility is to shift the scale with my small, seemingly insignificant act. And, in truth, it is just "seemingly" insignificant. For only G-d knows the import and ultimate consequence of a person's actions. I have to try to the best of my ability, and even stretch myself a little further than my ability allows, to tip the global scale through my small but world-shifting actions.

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

"Hashem Elokim called out to the man and said to him, 'Ayekah / Where are you?'" (3:9)

Midrash Eichah Rabbah relates: The Holy One, blessed is He, said, "I placed Adam Ha'rishon in Gan Eden, I gave him a commandment, he transgressed My commandment, I judged him and sentenced him to be exiled, and I wailed, 'Eichah!'" [Here the Midrash notes that the Hebrew words "Ayekah" and "Eichah" have identical spellings. Hashem continues,] "Similarly, I brought Adam's children into Eretz Yisrael, I gave them commandments, they transgressed My commandments, I judged them and sentenced them to be exiled, and I wailed (Eichah 1:1), 'Eichah' / 'How is it that she [Yer[Yerushalayim]s in solitude!'"

R' Shmuel Yafeh Ashkenazi z"l (1525-1595; rabbi of the Ashkenazic community in Constantinople, Turkey) explains that the Midrash is not merely making a play on two similarly spelled words; rather, "Eichah" and "Ayekah" express the same question. Indeed, R' Ashkenazi adds, the Midrash is teaching that Adam's sin (eating from the Etz Ha'da'at) and the sin that led to the destruction of the First Temple and the Jewish People's exile from Eretz Yisrael more than 3,000 years after Adam's sin (idolatry) were one and the same. He writes:

(continued on the other side)

Often, when a person sins, he has an excuse. Perhaps he did so out of necessity, as we read (Mishlei 6:30), "A thief is not scorned if he steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry." Or, perhaps he did not know it was prohibited. (That is why a Bet Din cannot administer lashes to a sinner unless two witnesses warned him that he was sinning, R' Ashkenazi notes.) Adam Ha'Rishon, however, had none of these excuses. "I placed him in Gan Eden," says Hashem. There he had everything that a person could want; he certainly was not hungry. And, "I gave him a commandment," says Hashem. He knew he was not permitted to eat from the Etz Ha'da'at. Therefore, when he sinned and I exiled him, "I wailed, 'Eichah!'" says Hashem. Eichah/ How is it possible that you (Adam) sinned? What were you thinking? Ayekah / Where was your mind wandering to?

R' Ashkenazi continues: Like Adam, Bnei Yisrael committed sins that were inexcusable—specifically, idolatry—and therefore the First Temple was destroyed and the nation was exiled. Historically, mankind worshiped idols, not as a rejection of the Creator, but because people believed that idols served as intermediaries between Him and man. But, says Hashem, "I brought Bnei Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael," a land overflowing with material and spiritual bounties. There, Bnei Yisrael had everything they could want. They had no need for intermediaries between themselves and the Creator, but, like Adam, they were not satisfied with their lot. Therefore, like Adam, they were punished. (Yefei Anaf: Petichta D'Eichah Rabati #5)

(by Rabbi Shlomo Katz from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)



Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the Kiddushim over Yom Tov!
Thank you to all who participated in the auction and to everyone who contributed both financially and spiritually to making this Succot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah very meaningful.

Kiddush this Shabbat is sponsored by **Dr. Moshe and Mrs. Maggie Silver** in commemoration of Moshe's father **Binyomin ben Mordechai's** yahrzeit on the 30th of Tishrei.



Yahrzeits This Week:

Rebetzin Rochel Kaplan	30 Tishrei - Monday night / Tuesday	for mother	Chaya bas Chanoch Henech HaKohen
Dr. Moshe Silver	30 Tishrei - Monday night / Tuesday	for father	Binyomin ben Mordechai

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Davening and Shiurim Schedule

<p>Friday, 10/05 — 26 Tishrei Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Candles — 6:24 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:25 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 10/06 — 27 Tishrei Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:59 a.m. Berachot Gemora Shiur — 5:10 p.m. Minchah & Seudah Shilishit — 6:10 p.m. Ma'ariv — 7:25 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday, 10/07 — 28 Tishrei Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:20 p.m.</p> <p>Monday, 10/08 — 29 Tishrei Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:20 p.m.</p>	<p>Tuesday — Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, 10/09 — 30 Tishrei Shacharit — 6:40 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:20 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday — Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, 10/10 — 1 Cheshvan Shacharit — 6:40 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:20 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, 10/11 — 2 Cheshvan Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:20 p.m.</p> <p>Friday, 10/12 — 3 Cheshvan Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Candles — 6:14 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:15 p.m.</p>
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