

Environmental Activism and Jewish Spirituality

A Roundtable Discussion

THE ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS of the *Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life* (COEJL, www.coejl.org), with which all three arms of the Reconstructionist movement are affiliated, is a signpost and motor force of a spreading concern about environmental issues in organized Jewish life. Arthur Waskow, editor of the recently published, two-volume *Torah of The Earth: Exploring 4,000 Years of Ecology in Jewish Thought* (with essays contributed by several Reconstructionists, *Jewish Lights*, 2000), writes in his introduction about the development of "a gathering of thought that might be called Eco-Judaism, a Judaism that [has] close to its very center a concern for the healing of the earth" — a concern that Waskow has helped to inspire through the work of The Shalom Center, which he heads.

RT recently responded to this "gathering of thought" by inaugurating a roundtable discussion about environmental activism and Jewish spirituality. We wrote to some dozen women and men in the Reconstructionist movement who have been significantly involved with environmental concerns. Eight responded, and their discussion is printed below. In addition, Josh Vander Velde, who staffs the JRF's *Tikkun Olam Initiative*, collected a few reports about environmentally oriented social action projects going on within JRF affiliates. These reports appear as sidebars throughout the discussion.

LAWRENCE BUSH: Let me begin in a *chutzpadik* way by calling into question the whole enterprise of "faith-based" environmental activism. Obviously, as committed Jews we're going to seek to ground our activism in the Jewish community and use Judaism and Jewish history as sources of inspiration and insight. But I also see dangers in "making a religion" out of environmentalism and emphasizing spiritually-based, rather than scientifically-based, solutions to our environmental problems. There's a book by Norman Levitt (a Rutgers University mathematician) called *Prometheus Bedevilled: Science and the Contradictions of Contemporary Culture*, which warns against environmental activism becoming "essentially a call to worship which will be heard only by a small, eccentric minority." Levitt detects, particularly in the deep ecology movement, "a strong edenic strain . . .

the desire for the whole of humanity to revert to a purportedly 'natural' lifestyle." He warns that if we insist that human values be reshaped, we are dooming the environmental movement to marginalization.

RABBI HOWARD COHEN: Matters of the environment are about relationships — and relationships, in my opinion, always contain at least a modicum of theological workings. There is so much evidence that points out how stupid and ill-conceived humanistic and "rational" attitudes are — how we've killed lakes with acid rain or destroy multiple ecosystems in order to extract a finite amount of some natural item such as trees — that it strikes me as patently obvious that Levitt is way off.

BUSH: What do you mean, "Matters of the environment are about relationships"?

COHEN: Both the organic and inorganic elements of life exist in relationship to one another. Who eats what? What happens when PCB-contaminated fish are hunted by hawks? What is the

reconsidering

Participants in this discussion include:

Lawrence Bush, editor of *Reconstructionism Today*.

Rabbi Howard Cohen (RRC '94) of Congregation Beth El in Bennington, VT; former Outward Bound director and founder of Burning Bush Adventures, Judaism in a Wilderness Context.

Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb (RRC '97) of Adat Shalom in Bethesda, Maryland, co-chair of the Interfaith Religious Witness for the Earth and member of the Board of Trustees of COEJL.

Rabbi George Driesen (RRC '99), a founding member of Adat Shalom, member of the RRC Board of Governors and an avid outdoors enthusiast.

Rebekah Jorgensen, a film producer and director, linguist and educational innovator who is a member of Kehillat Israel in Pacific Palisades, California.

David Roberts, chair of the St. Louis Jewish Environmental Initiative and president of The Reconstructionist Minyan of St. Louis; chair of the Development Committee of the RRC Board.

David Rosenstein, a member of Kehillat Israel and director of the Southern California region of COEJL.

Rabbi Margot Stein, Director of Communications for the JRF.

impact of increased snowmobile activity making tracks in deep snow and the increased success of wolves hunting rabbits? All of these questions are about relationships among species.

Martin Buber, of course, described these relationships in terms of "I and Thou." This may not quite fit with respect to other life forms (at least I'm not aware of that level of awareness elsewhere in the animal or plant world), but it certainly applies to human/nature relations. As a

Michael Heumann of **Congregation Havurah Shalom** in Portland, Oregon, writes:

A group of folks developed a project here for the High Holidays that was different from the more traditional *tzedakah* projects that collect selected items for distribution to those in need. This year, we asked the congregation to give to the earth, as a way of raising awareness about global warming issues and how individuals and congregations can reduce our contribution to greenhouse gases. Families attending Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services were asked to bring in incandescent bulbs from the light fixtures in their home and exchange them for compact fluorescent bulbs. An educational display and informational brochures accompanied the free light bulb exchange. Also, people could sign up to have a free lighting audit of their home or their business to learn about additional ways to save energy and money. We distributed over 700 compact fluorescent light bulbs to members of the community.

This activity served as a kick-off to a series of evening presentations and discussions about global warming and how we can and must change our behavior to reduce the impact we are having on our environment. The first evening event was held this October and included presentations by the Northwest Jewish Environmental Project. Future events at Havurah Shalom will bring together people from other local organizations and help focus the congregation's attention on ways to address the overarching threat to Creation in our time — global warming.

religious existentialist, I believe the "goal" of the search for God lies within relationships, all relationships. The more I experience "Thou" in my human relationships, the more I experience the divine. Similarly, the more I recognize the "Thou" aspect of my relationships with the non-human part of life, the more experience the divine there as well. In this way, I do not believe that a reasonable solution to our pending ecological crisis can be brought by engaging with our environment as an "it."

RABBI FRED SCHERLINDER DOBB: Not only did Buber extend the I-Thou relationship to a cat and a tree (and even a rock), but his theology of relationship becomes explicitly environmental. Consider this quote from *On Judaism*: "Real relationship to God cannot be achieved on earth if real relationships to the world and to mankind [sic] are lacking. Both love of the Creator and love of that which [God] has created are finally one and the same."

Religion is useless, and relationship with God vain, unless we love Creation as much or more than we love the Creator. Though neither Kaplan nor Eisenstein (z"l) made this formulation explicit, it's completely consonant with Reconstructionist theology — "to love God" we transpose divine *hesed* (acts of loving-kindness) into a human key. And perhaps our most pressing human (not to mention theological) crisis is our interconnection with the rest of Creation.

REBEKAH JORGENSEN: To the extent that these considerations of motive and language bog us down from just doing what in our hearts is right, they are a potential distraction, a way of derailing the work we do. Even on Kehillat Israel's Environmental Task Force, at one point we spent a couple of meetings trying to decide if we had to have a mission statement, strict parameters for our actions, etc. It was very numbing. At the end of the day, I finally decided that whether or not an environmental task force was housed there, I would continue to do my activities. Luckily, we decided to table the discussion and move on.

As a child I was surrounded by a plethora of people of different faiths and I was an ardent student of their similarities and differences. I once asked my mother, an anthropologist, what she thought was the most challenging of the major religions to follow, and she said, without hesitation, "Judaism." At the time I didn't quite understand why and assumed it had something to do with keeping kosher, but as I've gotten older and more immersed in Reconstructionism, I believe she was correct — and in that is our dilemma.

Most of the religions have a very strict idea of a responding force that will punish if you don't obey. Whether you believe in heaven and hell-fire, bad "karma" in the next life, fate, absolution — all have very clear and specific consequences for failing in your actions. This leaves less room for subtlety of thought and interpretation.

But Judaism, especially Reconstructionism, leaves it squarely on the individual's relationship with God and the world. While rooted in very deep

and meaningful traditions, we each make our own peace with how much *tzedakah* we give, how much *tikkun olam* we do, and how much tradition we follow. That is, in my mind, the strength of this path, but it is also what leaves us on edge, not quite certain: "Have we done enough?" "Should we do more?" "What will really make us feel in balance with creation?"

So if you need a scientific basis to warrant your action to have a comfort level, fine; if being rooted in Torah has the most meaning for you, that is acceptable, too. At our synagogue, I do a Monthly Mitzvah program for all the Tikkun Olam Task Forces with the religious school students. The children love it, whether it is cleaning up the beach, gathering warm clothing for those who are cold, hosting holiday parties for seniors. Whatever brings each individual child to the table of environmental action is ultimately up to that child. I will continue to try to provide a range of resources that will encourage that child's decision to pick up a shovel or a trash bag, respecting the privacy of that path. To me that is the wisdom and beauty of Reconstructionist thought.

RABBI GEORGE DRIESEN: I agree that we need all the allies we can gain, from whatever paths, in the struggle to preserve the Earth from the rapacity of human predators. If some of those allies seem unlikely, relating to them is just part of the task that I believe ranks high in the pantheon of a worthy religious tradition: preserving the good brown, green, and blue Earth for those who will come after us.

Still, we who demand political change need to be astute about the content of our appeals. There are, for example, a goodly number of mystical formulae and exercises designed to tie us to the "spirits of the earth." Practitioners tend to imagine that there is a mystic consciousness in inert matter and in plants that we can and should unite with our own. I remain wary of approaches like this. I think they lead to the triumph of feeling over thought, of the irrational over the rational, which, I think may prevent us from acquiring the tools and the data to do the best job we can to preserve this goodly globe for human habitation as long as possible. Like some of my forebears, I fear a descent into superstition, magic and self-absorption. Too much of that sort of thing, I imagine, will deprive us of credibility.

Classical Reconstructionism, which I imbibed with Ovaltine during my youth, thrilled me in part because Kaplan's prayer "God the Life of

Nature" spoke so movingly of the modern revolution in our understanding of the universe, and tied it to the God he recognized behind our observations and our understanding. His wonderful poem inspired us to link our ancestors' perceptions of the universe to our own, despite the evident differences between them. I learned very early on that preserving the possibilities for sensing the divine required "conservation" of nature, as "environmentalism" was then known, which meant simple things like not tearing branches off trees and not trampling grasses. It meant preserving the heritage that Teddy Roosevelt bequeathed to us by setting aside significant areas for the quiet enjoyment of the

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Program cover for Hoshana Rabbah observance organized by The Shalom Center (www.shalomcenter.org) in 1999. The gathering focused on General Electric's PCB pollution of the Hudson River and included both traditional and creative Hoshana Rabbah observances and an appearance by Pete Seeger. Hoshana Rabbah, the seventh day of Sukkot, involves recitation of prayers for deliverance from famine and drought. Jewish environmental activists, led by Rabbi Arthur Waskow, have applied the symbolism of Hoshana Rabbah to focus attention on the pollution of rivers and waterways. Artwork by Lawrence Bush.

natural world, and resisting the encroachments of so-called civilization on pristine areas.

Since then, scientists have measured and warned against the reckless destruction of habitat and the plundering of the earth's natural resources. Unlike most of us, scientists understood the dire consequences of everyone's running after immediate profits at the expense of future generations. Science, which is largely a disciplined form of observation and thought, makes plain that if men and women seek only present gratification and do not act

Rabbi Yitzhak Husbands-Hankin of Temple Beth Israel in Eugene, Oregon, writes:

Temple Beth Israel formed a *K'vod HaTeva* (Honoring Nature) Committee that last year hosted an environmental Fair in conjunction with our *Tu B'Shvat* seder. Included in the Fair were projects on display that had been created by students in our Talmud Torah (The most unusual was a worm farm). We also had several speakers who addressed Jewish environmentalism, and invited representatives from several environmental organizations to have displays. We had the regional office of COEJL as a co-sponsor.

Our congregation is also participating in the Interfaith Global Warming Initiative.

Our *K'vod HaTeva* Committee has a representative on our New Building Design Team in order to address the environmental sensitivities pertaining to our envisioned new facility.

I continue to work on a project of designing a certification system of "Ethical Kashrut." The primary context for this work has been within *Ohala*, the Jewish renewal rabbinic network. Many Reconstructionist rabbis are involved in that ongoing project development.

as stewards of the earth on behalf of generations yet unborn, those who come after us will be impoverished in spirit and materially. They will never see, let alone be in the presence of, the giant turtles that inhabit the Galapagos Islands, as we cannot see the magnificent Ivory Billed Woodpecker that selfish collectors slaughtered. Beyond that, if we do not use the earth's resources wisely, we will not be able to bequeath the great material gifts we have inherited to our descendants.

That feeling of responsibility to generations yet to come develops from rich religious cultures, like Judaism, which preserve the memory and the great works of preceding generations and teach ethics grounded in the

sacred quality of human life and the obligation to nurture and teach one's children.

RABBI MARGOT STEIN: Religion is very helpful in focusing our values and helping us answer our "need" and "greed" questions from a place of spiritual integrity, within the context of an organized community, with a shared set of assumptions about the role of law, tradition, ethics, God, etc. While individual differences can and must be voiced, the well-being of the group is a crucial factor in our religious decision-making. This makes our choices holy, something more than an expression of secular humanism.

BUSH: But "holy" is one of the words that unsettles me about religious environmentalism. Granted, when I stand in awe of nature and in distress over its despoilation (particularly in the name of petty goals and/or gross consumerism), I feel a certain kind of "authentic" or "holy" knowledge about the meaning of truth versus illusion, the natural versus the unnatural, God versus idolatry. Still, I'm reluctant to proclaim or attempt to legislate those feelings as though they amounted to *perception*, especially when I know that the concept of "the natural" or "the holy" has been constantly mobilized on behalf of warring human ideologies, with horrible outcomes.

It's also difficult to find the religious "group context" of which Margot Stein speaks when it comes to the "holy" in nature. Most varieties of Judaism, for example, are afraid of being too enraptured with nature for fear of indulging in biblically-forbidden idolatry. Judaism also tends to separate the human being from the web of life by virtue of being uniquely "created in God's image" (hence we deny rights and personhood to animals). Christianity, for its part, generally suffers from emphasis on salvation over creation — and how seriously can a Catholicism that opposes contraception be taken as a wellspring for environmental insight? It seems to me that religion commodified as dogma does as little for the planet as any other unrecyclable product. If faith-based environmental activism first requires a reconstruction of faith, how dynamic can it be?

DOBB: Very dynamic. From Capitol Hill we hear that they already know the secular environmental spiel, but they're willing to meet with

us "religious enviros" (amusingly, religion and labor are still referred to by major environmental groups as "non-traditional allies!"). We bring a fresh voice. In 1995, when the newly Republican House of Representatives wanted to gut the Endangered Species Act, our friends from the Evangelical Environmental Network came in and said "don't touch God's handiwork!" That turned the debate around. Likewise, COEJL's global warming advocacy, together with the Eco-Justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches in Christ, is producing amazing results.

Over half of America is affiliated with a church or synagogue under the umbrella of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (consisting of COEJL plus our Catholic, Protestant, and Evangelical friends). Let's use the power of tradition, the sway of religion, and the sustaining power of spirituality as we work together *"l'taken olam b'malhut Shaddai* —" to repair the world, ever-conscious of God's presence.

DAVID ROBERTS: Fred Dobb hits an important point when he notes the affiliations of Jews and Gentiles and the potential we have to reach out to this potential audience. But the task will be long and hard.

In St. Louis, our Jewish Environmental Initiative is developing educational programs for religious and day schools that teach through text and hands-on experiences. A second effort is to organize a leadership workshop for the local community relations council's constituent groups to begin to sensitize them to "our" issues. In addition, all Jewish organizations will, over the course of the next few years, be offered environmental audits to see in which areas they can all improve their use of materials, recycling etc.

One of our strategies in reaching out to both the Jewish and general communities is through a tree-planting initiatives in which we are committed to plant 60,000 trees, one for every Jew in the St. Louis community. This enables us to involve persons in a fun, hands-on activity and, perhaps, to get us in the door for other aforementioned activities. We also see the tree planting as a religious act.

DOBB: The truth is that Jewish spirituality, from the Bible and Talmud and Maimonides to Heschel and Kaplan and Plaskow, has always respected nature. From Genesis 1 on down, the Jewish ethic of stewardship disagrees with Vice President Cheney: We don't enjoy some divine right to

The Founding Statement of **The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)** was signed in 1992 by leaders of every American Jewish denomination as well as U.S. Senators Arlen Specter and Frank Lautenberg. The statement affirmed "our responsibility to address [our] planetary crisis in our personal and communal lives" and identified this as "a religious challenge" that "hovers over all Jewish concerns, for the threat is global, advancing, and ultimately jeopardizes ecological balance and the quality of life. It is imperative, then, that environmental issues also become an immediate, ongoing and pressing concern for our community."

Today, COEJL is the broadest coalition in the American Jewish community. All four major movements are affiliated with it, as are most major national Zionist, women's, fraternal, and defense/communal relations groups. Over a dozen cities or regions have active local COEJL chapters, with strong support from their local Federations and JCRC's (and disproportionate involvement by local Reconstructionists!), and another dozen or so are in formation.

COEJL's policy positions are formulated through the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the umbrella organization for national and local Jewish community relations organizations with which the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation recently affiliated. COEJL's 2001 action statement urged the development and adoption of renewal energy technologies through "market-based incentives . . . including taxation of pollution." It advocated containment of urban sprawl; government-enforced environmental regulation of industry and its products; a strengthened Endangered Species Act and the establishment of "interconnected, strictly protected biological preserves on land, in fresh water, and in the sea;" increased foreign aid for environmental protection and an increased emphasis on environmental protection by international finance institutions such as the World Bank and World Trade Organization; comprehensive testing of genetically engineered products and support for sustainable agriculture; and government action in Israel to protect the deteriorating Israeli environment.

COEJL pursues these goals through a wide array of programs, from national mass-mailings to lobbying Congress to educating rabbis and lay leaders. Its most visible projects have involved Jewish education and action around three major topics: forest conservation, endangered species ("Operation Noah"), and climate change ("Let There Be [Renewable] Light," this Hannukah). Details on all of COEJL's programs can be found at the website, www.coejl.org.

today's unsustainable "blessed lifestyle." Still, humans are special, since only our species is said to have been created in the Divine image. Religious environmentalism sees humans as part of the ecosystem, and sees social and ecological justice as inextricably tied together. According to

Kathy Roth of Temple Beth El in Newark, Delaware writes:

Our congregation participates in the Delaware Adopt-A Highway Program, which is a partnership between the Department of Transportation and volunteers of various organizations. Hundreds of tons of debris are removed from the sides of Delaware's roads each year. Our congregation enjoys stewardship of a two-mile section of highway near our site. Volunteers pick up trash along the roadside and give care and repair to our environment. We enjoy the satisfaction of making our community a better place to live. Conducting and reporting at least two cleanups per year entitles Temple Beth El to have our name on a sign along "our" road. Responsibility put into action is at the heart of the Adopt-A-Highway program.

the Psalmist, in fact, we most closely experience God through the Created order — so what does it say about our connection with the Divine when we drill, dam, clearcut, or change the climate of that Created order?

BUSH: But humanity constantly changes the "Created order"! How do we evaluate which of those changes represent "partnership with God" and which represent desecration of the Name? What about genetically altered food? What about cloning? The religionist in me finds it easy to say no to these innovations, which seem somehow spiritually wrong, or arrogant, or idolatrous. But the humanist in me stands in awe of our capacity to shape reality — and I am uncertain of how to restrain that capacity without resorting to coercion, taboo, the *shaytl*, the *chador*.

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DAVID ROSENSTEIN: My eyes glaze over at this kind of talk. I am not a theologian or a philosopher. I do not study Talmud, Torah or often go to services. But I am a Jew. I am also an environmental activist. Thus, I am a Jewish environmental activist. My connection to, and overwhelming awe of, this planet's magnificent web of life is my connection to the creator or "God" (whatever that word means). Since I am a Jew, it is a "Jewish" connection. My sense of ethics

and social responsibility are integral, inextricable parts of who I am. Since I am Jewish, they must be a Jewish morality and sense of social responsibility.

One bit of Jewish theology I have managed to pick up in my infrequent interaction with the faith is that Judaism is about "the small things." To my mind, Jews, to be "good" Jews, have to take much more responsibility for the consequences of the individual, daily, moment-to-moment actions and choices we all make in order to reduce, minimize, repair and stop the devastating damage we have done, and are doing, to creation. We often don't know, or have been taught to not care (especially by corporations that need us to constantly want more, buy more, consume more), about the consequences of our actions. We turn and leave on a light, it uses energy, and creates a waste product that goes into the atmosphere and harms the health of people, and in complex ways changes the climate, affecting every living thing on the planet. Who thinks about it? The car we drive is an ethical choice, a religious choice and a Jewish choice (if you happen to be a Jew like me): an SUV contributes a disproportionate amount of the gases that cause climate change, harm the poor, and alter the environment for every creature on the planet. Isn't religion all about taking responsibility for our actions? If you are a Jew, these issues are Jewish issues.

They are also almost always social justice issues. Global climate change has its biggest impact on the planet's poorest and neediest. Dumps and dirty industry are always sited in the poorest neighborhoods and contribute to their high rates of cancer, asthma, and other illnesses.

DRIESEN: That's why the most important marriage that needs to be nurtured is the one between science and politics. Our environmental tasks require knowledge of both the natural order and the dirty world of modern politics, and require great commitments of money and time — two commodities in short supply among worthy people.

Religious sensibility can enrich the soil for political action, however. Holding services occasionally at a mountain granite outcropping, and observing Shabbat by walking along a trail mindful of its beauty and singing or thinking our thanks for its beauty, as I have done on occasion, hone that sensibility. Prayer, preaching, and set ritual are not the only ways that our religious

life can be tied to "environmentalism."

STEIN: I think of art as a powerful medium for helping Jews experience the power of their own commitment to these values. Art has the capacity to "get in under the radar," to sneak past a person's normal defense mechanisms against uncomfortable information, so that before they realize cognitively what is happening, they are feeling a connection to the Creator and the created Universe, to their part in that Universe, and are beginning to understand on a visceral level why it is so important to take these matters seriously. Cognitive information can come later, when there is receptivity.

To give one example, I co-created a musical, *Guarding the Garden*, which explored Biblical teachings on the environment from an eco-feminist point of view. It was a black comedy which took Adam, Eve and Lilith "from Eden to the Edge." (The Edge refers to the edge of global destruction, brought on by rampant consumerism, competition and greed.) My song, "Eden Once Again," based on Judy Chicago's "Merger," was written for that production, but since then has become a standard supplementation to the *Aleynu* prayer. So, in addition to the 25,000 people who actually saw *Guarding the Garden*, there are the thousands more who have incorporated one of its songs into their prayer lives.

Is art sufficient for creating change? Of course not. Its role is to lay the groundwork, to inspire and educate so that individuals may experience their connection. From a place of deep connectedness and commitment, they/we take action. In the absence of other experiences of connection, art is a useful tool for opening us up to the possibilities of connecting to something greater than ourselves.

DOBB: In 1945, Kaplan wrote (in the introduction to the then-new Reconstructionist siddur) that "Each of us should learn to think of himself [sic] as though he were a cell in some living organism — which in a sense, he actually is." Likewise Maimonides, eight centuries earlier, said, "It should not be believed that all beings exist for the sake of humanity's existence . . . [rather] all the other beings too have been intended for their own sakes." Are these teachings any different from Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock's 1979 "Gaia Hypothesis," which says that the whole biosphere essentially

Cheryl Kollin, Annie Petsonk, and Rabbi Fred Scherlinger Dobb of Adat Shalom in Bethesda, Maryland, write:

Adat Shalom just moved into its new home earlier this year. Environmental concerns were one of the central pillars in the design process, from selecting eco-friendly materials (carpet made of recycled fibers, natural cork floor in the main hallway, sustainable or re-used wood, etc.) to passive solar design that saves energy by providing natural light and heat. In landscaping, we not only saved existing trees on site and employed high-efficiency drip irrigation, but selected native and well-adapted species for our new plantings. Several members chose potted plants rather than cut flowers to decorate their *simcha* tables; after consultation on appropriate species and transplanting technique, families planted them at the new building site.

We also have created a fledgling Environmental Subcommittee within our Social Action program which has held ecologically-oriented nature hikes and holiday celebrations, and has co-sponsored activities with DC's Shomrei Adamah, the local COEJL affiliate-in-formation. To reduce the number of disposables used at our huge weekly *oneg* and to raise money to purchase and plant native trees, we sold plastic *oneg* plates with lids. Many members bring, wash, and reuse these plates, decorated with our logo and the quip, "Adat Shalom Eats Well." In our new building, Adat Shalom held a fundraiser to purchase hundreds of regular plates to be used and washed each week. Most recently we held a "thermometer exchange" with Health Care Without Harm to rid our homes and environment of toxic mercury, and made low-cost and low-energy compact fluorescent bulbs available along with COEJL literature as part of the "Let There Be (Renewable) Light" Hanukkah campaign.

works like one huge macroorganism? What a profound critique our tradition offers of the status quo of life on Earth! "Centrist stewards" and "biocentric deep ecologists" may suggest different agendas, but we can and must come together to help stop the ravages we're now inflicting on Creation.

Since we shouldn't waste a moment in moving these noble spiritual teachings toward action, I agree that we need all the allies we can get. Religious folks and self-proclaimed environmentalists, together, can really make a difference. *KT*



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(SEE PAGES 2-3)**