

## **Resolution on Judaism and the Environmental and Social Crisis**

Whereas

1. Global temperature data for the first 10 months of 2001 indicate that it likely was the second warmest year since record keeping began in 1867. Following the all-time high of 1998, last year's near record extends a strong trend of rising temperatures that began in the late 1970's. The rise of about one degree Fahrenheit during the last century has had dramatic impacts on the environment -- from more intense heat waves, more severe droughts, and polar ice melting to more powerful storms, more destructive floods, rising sea level and disruption of entire ecologies. Yet that temperature change is quite small compared with the temperature rise over the next hundred years projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of 2.5-10.4 degrees Fahrenheit. If this projected rise in temperature occurs, there would be irretrievable damage to every ecosystem and humanity would be severely imperiled;
2. Species of plants and animals are becoming extinct at the fastest rate in history. By 2050 est. 25%-60% species will be lost since year 1000. Another estimate is that over 1 Million species were already lost since 1980 as the work of Creation is wantonly destroyed;
3. Natural resources are being depleted at an unprecedented rate due to the continued rapid population increase and the even faster increase of resources;
4. There are grave world-wide social environmental problems, including in Israel, such as enslavement and trafficking of millions of young girls and women, increasing aggression and violence, terror and warfare, poverty, drugs, starvation, AIDS (over 40 Million died and 63 Million infected or died), etc. These and other major problems are on the increase as social services are less and less able to cope;
5. Many major social problems are due to an Empathy Deficiency Syndrome. Some may also be due to increasing population as the ecosystem may become unsustainable;
6. Gross ecological neglect is likely to cause accelerating, irretrievable damage to every major ecosystem. Humanity and much of the work of Creation will be severely imperiled;
7. Like many other countries, Israel faces severe water shortage, widespread air and water pollution, congested roads, lack of open space, and an inadequate garbage and sewage ("waste") disposal system;
8. The ecological and social environmental problems are significant and growing in Israel. In some cases social and environmental problems in Israel may be worse than in many other developed countries. There are disconcerting signs of social problems unique to Israel and world Jewry, including: increased assimilation, political and religious fragmentation, alienation and hostility within the Jewish community;
9. Without resolve and new creative approaches the problems in Israel will significantly worsen since population between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean in Israel and Palestinian Authority administered areas is likely to double within decades.

In summary, there are great threats to the world's and Israel's social and ecological systems. Problems will worsen as the Israeli and Palestinian population continues their current rate of growth and as demands on resources increase at even faster pace.

And whereas,

1. Mankind's mastery of science and technology is increasing at an accelerated pace, with breakthroughs in biotechnology, information technology, and perhaps the greatest technology advance ever: nano-technology;

2. With enlightened planning and action, and a sense of urgency, these and other powerful emerging capabilities, including radically new transportation systems, alternative energy solutions, environmental architecture and tele-commuting may enable society's on-going development without current wanton environmental destruction;
3. Many important developments may also pose unprecedented threats to the ecosystem and humanity's social fabric at local, regional and global scope;
4. We are starting to understand major threats to life due to suddenly emerging mega-ecology problems triggered by natural forces, which may rapidly and severely disrupt much if not all of the ecosystem. Asteroid hits, very "dirty" volcanic eruptions, volcanic walls collapsing into the oceans and causing 50-100 meter tsunamis on distant continents, and other potential grand scale devastation require a new, global, unified and future oriented look, as well as timely development of effective predictive and counter measures.

And because it is a core Jewish belief that mankind has been created in God's image (*Betzelem Elokim*), we are partners of God in the on-going creation and fixing of the world and a guardians of the ecosystem and we must find a renewed balance between individuality and various human systems.

And because basic principles of Judaism like *Ahavta Reitcha Kemocha*, *Bal Tashchit*, *Yishuv Ha'Aaretz*, *Tzar Ba'ale Chaim* and halakhic rulings mandate that we have a harmonious and ethical relation to others and to all aspects of the environment: human, animal, plant, inanimate, space and time.

We resolve to:

1. Encourage thinking beyond the *present* and *past* by making the *future* an integral part of Jewish thought, law and action, and take responsibility now for events 25, 50, 100, 1000 years from now, which we can shape if we act in an enlightened and responsible manner;
2. Seek pragmatic, unusually creative, holistic visions to help resolve major social and ecosystem related problems. We must approach this with a heightened sense of personal and group integrity and accountability, and a due sense of urgency, integrating halakhic and scientific/technological knowledge;
3. Help educate our congregations and other local Jewish groups about Jewish teachings and laws on critical issues facing the world today and in the future, and to urge "*Caring*, *Knowing* and *Doing*" in Israel and word-wide;
4. Help educate our congregations and communities about the importance of personal and collective responsibility about a broad range of social issues, diet, means of transportation, use of energy, water and other resources, quality of air and water, and other areas, in order to reduce environmental and social threats in Israel and globally;
5. Assure that the ecosystem is turned over intact by generation to generation and assure a good quality of life for future generations;
6. Assure that the ecosystem is responsibly managed so that it will remain available for the future generations of mankind.
7. To make Tikun Olam a central focus of synagogues, Jewish schools, Jewish centers, other Jewish institutions and groups - with focus on the saving and healing of the interrelated global and national environments, diminishing or resolving social problems, with a clear long-term perspective;
8. To work with colleagues on getting these issues in the center of the Jewish and other communities' agenda.

## Some Major Global Indicators

(Based on a dynamic computer model on <http://www.palmtalk.com/> and to be verified)

<b>Asset/Phenomenon</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Population	6.2 Billion People on Earth
AIDS	63.6 Million Infected or Killed
Hepatitis C	212 Million Infected or Killed
Arable Farmland	4.8 Billion Acres Remain
Deforestation	7.3 Billion Acres Remain
Soil Erosion	608 Billion Tons Lost*
Rainforests	1.7 Billion Acres Lost*
Sea Levels	Mean Rise*: 0.22 meter
Species Extinction	1.1 Million Species Lost*
World Energy Use	8.7 Billion Barrels Oil Equivalent/year
Oil Reserves	977.9 Billion Barrels Remain
Natural Gas	141,399 Billion Cubic Meter Remain
CO2 Level	Atmosph. CO2(ppm): 374.3
Global Warming	Mean Rise (C)*: 2.2

(\*) indicates change since 1980