

Common sense
ethics in judaism
teachings instruct us
how to act towards
protectin...

[Environment](#), [Ecology](#)



How do ethical teachings in Judaism guide adherents to be ‘ wise in deeds’? – in your response, refer to environmental ethics

Environmental ethics in Judaism is an attempt to define a system of values to guide adherents in the world. Ethical teachings in Judaism, which are derived from the Tenak (more specifically the Torah) and the Talmud guide adherents to be ‘ wise in deeds’ as they provide a platform for ethical guidance in the daily lives of adherents. These ethical teachings, through guiding adherents to be wise aims at affirming the beliefs in the oneness of god, the idea of the covenant and moral prescribed law through Bal Tashkit, Tikkun Olam and Stewardship.

Bal Tashkit is a term that means ‘ do not destroy’ and is derived from a passage in Deuteronomy 20: 19. It comes from a passage which instructs adherents on how to treat crops in a time of a siege, and beyond its biblical context has been extended to prohibit all forms of careless destruction, waste, or excessive use of resources. It is a Talmudic principle that underpins the teachings of Judaism on the environment, and is aimed at keeping the covenant, affirming the belief in one god and the moral prescribed law, and it is from this text that the oral tradition of ethics is seen. The two main components of this is Halachah (which is the legal component) and Aggadah (which is the non legal component). This guides adherents to be ‘ wise in deeds’ as it essentially informs the way that individuals act and behave on a daily basis, both lawfully and non-lawfully. Bal Tashkit guides daily behavior as instructs adherents to take care of what has been given to them by G-d,

respecting him and the covenant. For example, it is unethical, according to Judaism teaching, to cut down trees, however Rabbi Moshe Ben Raimon (Maimonides) who was a theologian, philosopher and physician stated that it is lawful to do so if it is damaging the property of others. Everything created on the earth was in G-d's purpose and Maimonides states that "all beings have been created for themselves and not for others". This highlights how Judaism guides adherents to be 'wise in deeds' as it instructs them on how to behave in order to ensure that they fulfill the covenant, the moral prescribed law and affirm the belief in the idea of one god. Through the earth being destroyed due to selfish behavior, adherents are then taught to be 'wise in deeds' through Tikkun Olam.

Midrash Rabbi 1 defines Tikkun Olam as "humanities responsibility to repair gods gift" and comes as a result of Bal Tashkit. Tikkun Olam acknowledges that the world today has been destroyed and damaged through human greed and selfishness and therefore needs to be repaired, and from an environmental perspective is founded on a midrash. Tikkun Olam guides adherents to be 'wise in deeds' as it applies to every single aspect of an adherents life, as it instructs them, for example, to not use more than what they need. This is seen through the words of Rabbah 1: 18 as "the one who ate fine food suffered, while the one who ate the coarse food escaped harm". It hence guides and instructs adherents to build a sustainable world and to reduce the unequal distribution of wealth and resources around the world. Restoring the world also demonstrates the covenant, highlights the moral prescribed law and affirms the oneness of God as adherents

essentially act as stewards of G-ds gift of creation. As the Tenak, more specifically, the Torah, does not contain contemporary issues as they would not have been problems at the time the text was written, adherents turn to Maimonidies for guidance on how to be ' wise in deeds'. For example, as Maimondies was so educated and highly respected for his knowledge towards Judaism, that adherents, as well as scholars asked him for guidance. This was done through ' responsa' in which he answered questions, for example, adherents may of asked how to perform Tikkun Olam successfully in regards to a modern issue such as deforestation. This guides adherents to be ' wise in deeds' as in instructs adherents on how to treat the environment in specific situation, in according with G-d in order to fulfill the covenant, affirm the belief in one god and to maintain the moral prescribed law. This can also be seen in the Noah Project, which is a organization founded in 2002 that committed to raising awareness on environmental issues and repairing G-ds gift of earth. Through both Bal Taskit and Tikkun olam, stewardship is demonstrated and further allows adherents to be ' wise in deeds'.

Stewardship is the role of adherents to show respect and care for G-ds gift of earth. Genesis speaks of God placing human kind in the garden of eden and instructing them to guard and till it, which is referred to as Lovolah ul Shomrah, which literally means to guard and protect. This guides adherents to respectfully care for the land that G-d created for adherents as they have the responsibility to ensure that it remains fruitful. Leviticus 25: 5-6 demonstrates this whereby the fields are to lie fallow every 7th year to

ensure against over taxing of resources and fruitfulness. This role of stewardship is seen as adherents are guided to ' be wise in deeds' through the observance of weekly Shabbat. This is a reminder that God has ultimate ownership of the world and human beings are its caretakers. Adherents are permitted to work and use earths resources for 6 days, then are to let it rest on the 7th and are called upon to " refrain from all labour that things of nature". This is so significant for adherents in being ' wise in deeds' that orthodox Jews have previously arranged local councils to turn off power for street lights to persevere the earths natural resources, allowing it to lie fruitful. This guides adherents to be in partner with god, hence fulfilling the covenant and moral prescribed law (which Sabbath is apart of), also affirming the oneness of God as they increase the sustainability of the worlds resources. This highlights how Judaism guides adherents to be ' wise in deeds' as the teaching of stewardship is essentially ensuring that the gift of God is kept and sustained in an authentic form.