“Speak to the Earth and it will Instruct You” (Job 12:18)

Building a Jewish Environmental Movement

Rachel Harrison Rhodes

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Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion,
Debbie Freidman School of Sacred Music
New York, New York

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Advisor: Dr.Adriane Leveen

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Our planet is facing a crisis. By the year 2050, HUC-JIR in New York City could be under a few feet of water.[1] Although the western world is a just a small fraction of the world population, we contribute the most to the demise of our planet by releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The evidence of global climate change is overwhelming. A global temperature rise of 1.8° Celsius that is predicted to occur in the next decade[2] will increase the number of heat waves, tropical storms, and forest fires throughout North America. It will cause larger and longer droughts in the poorest countries of the world. The rare animals of our planet will find it increasingly difficult to find food and land in which to live and thrive. And we are causing it all.

We are thus faced with the decision to keep dominating the natural world or to start living as part of it, and as our Jewish community faces this ecological crisis along with the rest of humanity, I would urge us to be at the forefront of change.

In a radical essay published in 1967 by the magazine *Science*, Lynn White Jr. claimed that the historical roots of our ecological crisis is due almost entirely to Genesis 1:28- "And God blessed them (Adam and Eve) and said: be fruitful and multiply and fill the land and subdue it, and you shall have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creeps over the earth." Dr. White stated that because our Torah gives the Judeo-Christian world the right to "have dominion" over all creatures of the earth, we have come to abuse our planet and view it as a commodity rather than a living, breathing, entity.

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[1] Atlas, James. "Is this the End?" *New York Times Sunday Review*. 24 November 2012, online.

[2] "The current and future consequences of global climate change." *NASA*, 10 January 2014, online.

It is clear to me and many others that if Dr. White had only looked one chapter further his entire argument would have been considerably weaker. In Genesis 2:15- "And God took Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden in order to work it and be a steward to it", we see clearly that God expects humankind to be a steward on the land- to keep the land flourishing and balanced. Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13 takes this notion of stewardship forward by stating: "HaKadosh Baruch Hu took the first human and passing before all the trees of the Garden of Eden said: 'See my works, how fine and excellent they are? All that I created, I created for you. Reflect on this and do not corrupt or desolate my world; for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you.'" We see in this proof text that God made a world in which no creature was superfluous, no being without purpose. Nature is thus never an end unto itself- it always leads us back to God. The world was not created for humans alone, but as a place for God to dwell in harmony with all that God created![3]

The ancient Israelites lived an agrarian lifestyle that allowed them to gain deep insight into the inner workings of the planet. In the Torah, all moral and immoral deeds have positive or negative effects on nature, and the land responds accordingly. The ground betrays Cain after he kills Abel (Genesis 4), the earth swallows Datan and Aviram (Numbers 16), and the 10 Plagues curse the Egyptians (Exodus 4-11). The ancient Israelite relationship with the planet was one of fear and awe- not of control! We are faced now, in the current day, with that same dilemma. If we do not learn to live more in tandem with the natural world, we will find ourselves literally being engulfed by it.

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[3] Artson, B. Shavit, 'Revisiting Creation, Natural Events and Their Emergent Patterns,' *CCAR Journal: The Reform Jewish Quarterly*, eds. P. Cohen and H. Tirosh-Samuelson (Winter, 2012)

In Deuteronomy 20:19-20, we are introduced to the idea of *bal tashchit*, or do not destroy: "If you besiege a town for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you **must not destroy** it in order to take it, you **must not destroy** its trees by wielding an ax against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down." It is clear in this passage that Scripture understands both the interdependency of humanity and nature as well as our tendency to needlessly destroy. The Torah text protects the land's rights through divine law. Throughout rabbinic literature *bal tashchit* is abstracted to many other situations and can be applied, in theory, to everything. One is not allowed to destroy buildings or kill animals that are not for food, waste money, or break things. Above all, the Talmud warns against reckless destruction as the source of idolatry- any act of damage done in anger is a violation of *bal tashchit* because it can lead to thoughtless worship of idols. On the other hand, the rabbis of the Talmud concede that any legitimate desire of humans or God overrules the law of *bal tashchit*. The law protecting nature can give way to justifiable human necessity. If the wood of the fruit tree is worth more to its owner than the fruit it yields, it may be chopped down to sell the lumber. We are allowed to clear forests to make space for a public building or to build an alter.

In essence, *bal tashchit* forces us to stop and think **before** the destruction of any natural thing. We are commanded to reflect on our financial and spiritual reasoning behind any action and decide what is best for our needs and the continued prosperity of the natural world. Explicity in the above principle is the demand for acute environmental

sensitivity- one must carefully weigh every decision with care, for every action in the natural world comes with a set of ramifications.[4]

Jewish texts can offer a rubric for a call to action to support environmental causes. For this thesis, I plan to take a close look at *T'filat Geshem* (the annual prayer for rain) and Psalm 104. These texts help gain insight into what the Jewish religion has to say about ecology and our deep-running relationship with the environment. They also provide an outline for how to interact with the natural world in a sustainable way.

These ancient songs will then bring us to a more modern example of music in social movements. In the second chapter, I examine the Civil Rights movement and its influential music in order to glean how those meaningful pieces added an extraordinary power to the cause. The Civil Rights movement has a vast amount to teach our budding Jewish environmental movement regarding the use of music to inspire social change.

The third chapter showcases the personal stories of Jewish environmentalists who have fought long and hard to galvanize this movement. By looking deeper at their current programs that call for Jewish stewardship of the natural world I discuss 1) If and how they are successful, 2) The Jewish teachings that helped steer them on this path, and 3) How they touch modern Jewish lives in order to make change. Each interview provides a moving example of the on-the-ground reality of their struggle to reach the broader Jewish community. Please note that additional materials, such as translations, interview outlines, and examples of environmental *t'filot,* can be found in the appendix.

[4] Talmud Shabbat 105b.

With these three examples as guides for us, we can begin to see how text, music, and motivated people can come together to create a cultural paradigm shift towards sustainability in the Jewish community and at large.

Chapter I
Inspiring Texts for a Jewish Environmental Movement

In the Jewish textual tradition, the Psalms and our liturgy provide historical pictures of how Jews viewed the natural world and their role in it. These texts give the modern day Jew insight into our past interaction with the world and its wonders, imbuing us with a chronicle of how we can continue to relate to the natural world in both a historically Jewish and modern environmentalist way. In particular, both Psalm 104 and *T'filat Geshem* from the Sukkot liturgy exemplify these ideas. By taking a deeper look at both of these texts we can uncover the messages from our ancestors that can aid us in our fight to protect our planet.

Part I: Psalm 104

Psalm 104, a parable for creation and example of our world's biodiversity, gives us a deep and powerful sense of how our people should value God's creation. The psalmist takes us through every moment of creation- explaining that each creature has a place and a purpose on this planet, and that our job as humans is to both admire and aim to protect the intricate spirit of God's world. The psalmist also teaches us humility by showing us how God made the planet equally for the creatures and for us. We are just a small part of God's extraordinary world.

The psalmist begins by tracing the days of creation but expands on them, opening before us a world of intricate dynamics and symbiotic relationships. The author makes it

clear that the world was not only created for the joy of humans but in celebration of God- who “covers the heights in waters/ puts a chariot in the clouds/ who wanders on the wings of the wind.”[5] As mere mortals we can only begin to imagine how the world is pieced together, and even the beginning hints of understanding are unparalleled to the expansive knowledge God possesses. The psalm, simply put, leaves us in pure and utter awe. This feeling can lead us to a humility that is essential to our much-needed ideological shift in how we view our relationship to the natural world. The workings of the world are incredible and beyond our comprehension, and therefore they do not belong to us: we are here merely to care for the creatures of this world. This sense of humility and the understanding that we cannot and should not be in control will lead us down the path of sustainability.

The psalmist begins his magnificent poem with a command to bless the creator of our world. "Bless, Adonai, my soul!" God is great and all-powerful, and every extrapolation of blessing must come from praise. We are commanded to bless God and thank God for the planet that sustains us. The psalmist continues to describe how God is wrapped in light like a dress, and simultaneously "spreads the sky like a tent-cloth." This brings to mind the sun peaking through an expanse of clouds in a wide sky, casting beams of light down to earth. It is in moments like these, where we see God's light shining down in such an extraordinary way, that we are commanded to "Bless!" For although the light is not *for* us, we are lucky enough to be part of the creation that experiences it.

[5] The translation of Psalm 104 is mine and can be found in full with annotations at the end of this thesis.

Even in just these first few verses we are reminded that light is essential to everything else. Without it, nothing would exist- the waters would cease to form, plants would stop growing, and we in turn would whither. And God, in this psalm, *is* light. Everything comes from God and returns to God.

The psalmist continues to describe the elements that are in God's power: wind, fire, earth, and finally water. The heavy, balanced language used in the next few verses (such as "*establishes* the earth on its foundations" and "shall *never totter")* provides the reader with a sense of calm and clarity. The elements are not only in God's control, but are also messengers of God! Through our interaction with the elements we have contact with God- every breeze, every mountaintop, and every river is a direct connection to the Creator.

Water, especially, has set boundaries. After God establishes the valleys, God places rivers to run through them- but God makes sure that the waters "will not return to cover the earth." The imagery of verses nine and ten provide a direct connection to Job 38:10 and God's voice from the whirlwind. As God sets the boundaries of the sea, God also creates a specific place for the mountains, valleys, and fields. Herein lies the miracle, for without those places the land-dwelling plants and animals would not be able to survive on earth.

The psalmist describes a world in which the waters do not overrun their boundaries and the land provides a place for animals to stand while they drink from the springs. Humans, however, have taken the boundaries given by God to the waters and broken them. We have built damns that create huge flood plains and destroy the natural habitat of many plants and animals. Soon, in direct result of our increased CO2

emissions, we will see a rise of a few feet in the sea level, demolishing miles of marshland that is home to birds, nesting turtles, and warm-water fish (to name a few). We are playing God to a disastrous result when trying to “keep the waters in their places.” We have lost in many ways the humility the psalmist describes in his poem, and must regain a connection to it.

After the elements are described, the psalmist begins to explicate the many variations of plants and animals that live on our earth. Humans are only mentioned in three out of sixteen verse extolling the greatness of all the living things. It becomes clear that God is pleased with creation even *without* humans: birds are given their nests, mountains are for goats, and "cracks are refuge for hares." The planet provides specific things in response for even more specific needs by those who inhabit it, and God provides willingly. It also becomes quite clear that all life can be traced back to God: God creates the water that helps plants grow that feeds the cattle. Humans are then able to plow their land and reap wheat to make bread. Yet, humans must be the ones to initiate the cultivation of food. While God provides willingly for other animals, God only provides *tools* for humans. We are the ones that must pick them up and work for what we sow.

It is with this thought in mind that we can begin to piece together a more sustainable existence on our planet. Although we have the tools to create more and more and more, we need to curb our consumerism and focus on what we need rather than what we desire. It has been proven over and over that wealthier people aren't necessarily happier! As the psalmist says in verse 15: "Wine shall cheer the hearts of humanity; make faces shine brighter than oil; and bread that sustains the heart." We are called to foster cheer through simple pleasures of wine and bread in order to sustain our hearts. It is

through the interaction with God, the natural world, and each other that we find our true happiness, and this should be fostered in our society more than a continuous need to own more possessions.

Even the psalmist discusses the fragility of happiness. In verses 28-29: "You give it [food] to them to gather up; you open your hands and they are well satisfied / If you hide your face they are terrified; take away their breath and they perish; they return to dust." I would venture to say that we are in a time when God's face is hidden from us. We have polluted the world in which we live to such an extent that God's original creations are dying off. We need to scrape away all the extra things in our life that do not make us happy, and try to create an existence that lives more in tandem with the complex world God created. Nothing we "gather up" is for free, even though we try to convince ourselves otherwise. We pay a price for our consumerism, and we must ask ourselves is that price worth the disappearance of God's creatures.

According to Samuel Terrien in his comprehensive book about the psalms, Psalm 104 has seven strophes that symbolize all seven days of creation: sky, earth, water, vegetation, moon and sun, the great sea, life-giver, and the glory of Adonai. When we step back, we can see how each arena is being challenged through human actions. We are punishing God’s earth and can see it crumbling before our eyes, sending us undeniable signs that we are the cause of its destruction- yet we ignore the warnings. God's face is turned away from us as we continue to violate the laws set down in the first days of creation. Let the values of the Jewish text teach us to value each creature, plant, and landform as being set here specifically by the will of God.

The environmental movement is a Jewish movement! As we have seen, the messages the environmental movement sends are the same messages found within this ancient Jewish text. With respect for what is living around us, and a humility that we do not have all of the answers, maybe we can use Psalm 104 to help us live a more Jewish and sustainable lifestyle. I will now turn to another Jewish text that focuses more specifically on water: *t'filat Geshem*.

Part II: *T'filat Geshem*

Prayers for rain are among the earliest liturgical texts.[6] When rain fails to fall in *Eretz Yisrael*, the Israelites view it as a punishment from God for a wrongdoing. It is key to remember that the Israelites and subsequently the Jews lived in an arid climate that depended on plentiful rainfall during the winter and spring to bring about a steady yield of crops. If rain did not come, food did not come- and therefore prayers to a God who nourishes and sustains had to include pleas for rainfall.

There are many examples of drought as punishment in the *Tanach*. For instance, in Deuteronomy 11:11-17, God demands the people "heed diligently to my commandment" to "love and serve God"- and only then will God bestow rain upon the land. In one passage, Deuteronomy 11:14, God uses the word *yoreh* to describe the first rain of the season. Just the fact that the Israelite nation had a special word for the very first rain gives us a deeper understanding of how vital sufficient rainfall was to their livelihood and how observant they had to be regarding the yearly rainfall. And in return for such abundant water, God wants only love and fidelity. In Leviticus 26:4, a very

[6] Katsnelson, Jacob. "Rain, prayer for" *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007. 73. Print.

similar passage occurs: "Then I will give you rain (*geshem*) in due season, and the land shall yield her produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit." And again, in Ezekial 34:26: "And I will make them and the places around my hill a blessing; and I will cause the rain (*geshem*) to come down in their season; there shall be showers (*gishmay bracha*) of blessing."

The Hebrew word *geshem* appears for the first time in the story of Noah and the flood. There are, however, more than just one word for rain in Hebrew. There is *yoreh* (first rain), *malkosh* (late rain), and *matar* (plain old rain). In addition, there is *geshem n'davot* (bounteous rain), *geshem gadol* (big rain), *hamon geshem* (abundant rain), and *geshem shotef* (torrential rain). Oddly enough, the word *geshem* does not appear even once in *t'fillah geshem*, but the word for water (*mayim*) does.

The fact that we can identify biblical texts devoted to concerns of sufficient rainfall reflects how the Israelites were keenly in tune with the natural world. In order to find ways to worship and please God in the absence of the temple, the rabbis created *t'filot* asking for rainfall. In Mishnah Seder Mo'ed Ta'anit chapters 1-3, the rabbis talk about the power of prayer and repentance to bring about rain. In these chapters, the rabbis discuss when and why we recite the prayer for rain on *Sukkot*. Even though we are inscribed on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* in the book of life or death, we are judged worthy or unworthy of rain only on *Sukkot*[7]- highlighting the importance of this festival holiday. For, at a time when rain also signified life or death, *Sukkot* became just as important to our future vitality as *Rosh Hashanah* or *Yom Kippur*.

[7] Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 2:1

While it is a curse to receive rain on *Sukkot* (since many would then be stuck in their *sukkah* in a downpour), it is equally a curse to not receive rain after the *chag* is over[8]. In the fourth mishnah, the rabbis begin to discuss what should happen if *t'filat Geshem* is recited and no rain comes. One says that if the seventeenth day of *Heschvon* passes and no rain has come, then the leaders of the community should fast for three days and eat and drink only when the sun has gone down. If *Rosh Chodesh Kislev* passes with no rain, then the community also has to fast for three days. If this still doesn't work, then the community must fast for seven more days. If these fast days still do not bring rain, then it becomes clear that actions towards each other have not been loving and the people are being reprimanded by God. If, despite fasting and praying, rain has not yet come, then the Jews are a cursed people who must take a closer examination at their human interactions.

In this *Mishnah*, the arrival of rain becomes not only a symbol of life but also a metaphor for our morality. When rain doesn't come, it is clear to that we have wronged each other and God. In light of our current environmental crisis, I would take this claim a step further. Rather than blame others or natural causes beyond our control when droughts, floods, or natural disasters destroy our cities and claim thousands of lives, we need to take a look at ourselves and our actions that have contributed to these natural phenomena. Those living in the ancient Israelite culture and in the rabbinic age were ready and willing to accept blame. We need to face the fact that we, *every single day*, contribute to the depletion of our planet and our resources. When the weather does not

[8] Mishnah Mo'ed Ta'anit 1:2

work to our liking, we should take a look at ourselves and our actions, rather then put the blame on someone else or avoid the issue entirely.

We can learn environmental concepts from Torah and our rabbis of old as they inspire us to reaffirm our connection to the natural world and teach us how to live within its boundaries. We must remember that we are not in control- a fact our ancestors knew very deeply. Our connection with water is more than just a natural resource; it is a thread that follows us through life and death, success and suffering, spiritual awakening and deep sorrow. These ideas are most brilliantly illustrated by an incredible *piyyut* recited yearly during *Sukkot.*

T'filat Geshem, and more specifically *Z'chor Av,* is now recited on the eighth day of *Sukkot* in the *Amidah,* right after the *avot* prayer. From thereafter until the first day of *Pesach,* the insertion "*mashiv haruach u'morid haGashem*" (who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall) is included in the *G'vurot* prayer of the *Amidah.* The *piyyut* is an alphabetic acrostic that refers to biblical forefathers and their interaction with water. *T'filat Geshem* does not act as a petition for water, but rather explicates our deep and intrinsic connection to this natural element that is the source of all life. The *piyyut* makes it obvious that without water our ancestors would be without sustenance and thus- without life.

Many assume that *Z'chor Av* was written by the seventh-century *paytan* Eliezer ben-Kallir, but that is a fallacy. Kallir did write *Af B'ri*, the piyyut that immediately precedes *Z'chor Av* in the Amidah. However, *Z'chor Av* itself was inserted into the *G'vurot* prayer as part of *minhag Polin* much later than the seventh century, although the exact date is not known. It serves as one of seven original insertions that eventually

became the favorite and was permanently codified into the *minhag Polin siddur*.[9] *Z'chor Av* begins with a paragraph that refers to our forefather, Abraham.

> Remember the father (Abraham) who followed you like water.[10]
> You blessed him like a tree planted near streams of water
> You protected and saved him from fire and from water
> You cared for whatever he sowed next to all water.

Here, we remember Abraham (*av* in the Hebrew) and his deep and flowing connection to God. The *paytan* uses imagery from Psalm 1 to express how Abraham, a righteous person who delights in Torah, is planted like a tree that grows near an endless source of water. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."[11] A tree is a symbol for many things in Jewish practice: the Torah, life, creation, righteousness, and fertility. By using a tree to describe Abraham, the author of this *piyyut* gives all of these attributes and more to our first Jewish ancestor. Yet, more importantly, the *paytan* alludes to the idea that Abraham is constantly nourished by water from God. That water becomes an allegory for the endless faith that Abraham has in God, despite the many tribulations he is put through during the course of his life.

In the next stanza, the *paytan* alludes to Abraham's trial against fire and water- and here *N'tiv Binah*[12] explains the midrash behind this quotation. Abraham and Isaac,

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[9] The fact that *Z'chor Av* is not part of the *piyyut Af B'ri* is discussed in both the *Machzor Sukkot* by Daniel Goldschmidt and The Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry compiled by Yisrael Davidson, page 209.
[10] The following translation used in this paper is my own.
[11] All biblical translations provided by the *Tanach* application for iPad published by the Davka Cooporation 2013.
[12] Ya'akovson Zachel, HaRav Yissacar. N'tiv Binah, Sinai Publishing: Israel, 1978.

having completed the *akedah*, are on their way back down the mountain of Moriah when a large river summoned by Satan appears from nowhere and swallows them up to their necks. Abraham turns his face up to heavens and cries: "God, are you to kill us now that you've saved Isaac? How can we bless and honor your name if you drown Isaac?" And with that, the waters of evil depart and Abraham and Isaac are spared.

In the second and third line of this paragraph, the *paytan* juxtaposes the power of water to be both a force of life and a force of death. Abraham, whose faith is like a river that circumvents all obstacles in its path, is both nourished by the water of the righteous and also threatened by the floods of Satan! God, in the end, saves Abraham and Isaac and defends them.

The last stanza, in my opinion, gives us the clearest picture of the *paytan's* interpretation of Abraham's deep relationship with God. God trusts in Abraham so deeply that he promises to care for whatever Abraham sows and to nourish it with water. The rabbis interpret this verse to mean that what he sowed was Torah and what he reaped was righteousness, but I would like to take it further by extending the imagery of the language. Abraham's faith was both as solid as stone and as flexible as water. No matter what obstacle God placed before him, he bypassed it as a stream would flow over a rock. Abraham shows fluidity in his faith- though always falling towards God like a waterfall tumbles down a cliff, he is able to determine his own path. The concept of Abraham's free will goes right to the core of Judaism! While we all strive to be close to God, we must determine the best way to arrive at that point. And if our belief is like water, then

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N'tiv Binah is a commentary on the *machzor* by HaRav Yissacar Ya'akovson Zachel first published in 1978. I have used this commentary heavily in my research because it is one of the only liturgical compilations to delve deeply into the source texts of this *piyyut.*

faith is knowing that just because we have hit a stone we are not off the path entirely- we just need to find a new way.

> Remember the birth (Isaac) that was predicted over a little water
> You told his father to slay him, to spill his blood like water
> He also was anxious to pour his heart out like water
> He dug and found wells of water.

The *paytan* introduces us to Isaac by reminding us of the story in *Bereshit* in which Abraham fetches a little water for three strangers that appear at his tent. Due to Abraham's kindness to the visitors in sharing his precious stores of water, God sends an angel to inform Sarah that she is pregnant despite having long been barren. Water is the trigger for Isaac's life. Yet, after we hear about Isaac's very first beginning, the author reminds us of his instance of near death- when God commands Abraham to spill his blood "like water" and give Isaac, his only son, as a sacrifice. This line refers to the sacrificial explanations of Deuteronomy 12:16 when we are commanded to "not eat the blood; you shall pour it upon the earth like water."[13] The blood of the sacrificial animal, which the rabbis believed to contain the soul, then reenters the dust from which it came and upon its convergence with the soil replenishes the earth. We learn the power of renewal and connectedness through this ritual, and the upmost respect the ancient Israelite culture had for their animal sacrifices.

The last line of this verse, "He dug and found wells of water," refers to *Bereshit* 26:15.[14] Isaac had been living in the land of the Philistines under the rule of Avimelech. When Avimelech casts Isaac out of the land due to his increased power, he and his family pitch a tent in the valley of Gerar. Yet- there is no water. In their attempt to wipe out

[13] Ibid 203.
[14] Ibid.

Isaac's descendants, the Philistines filled all of Abraham's wells. In desperation, Isaac's servants begin to dig feverishly for water- and they find three active wells and name them *Esek, Sitnah,* and *R'chovot*. *Esek,* meaning strove, refers to the herdsman of Isaac who strove to find water; *Sitnah*, translates as floating (though the verse omits the explanation of the name); and *R'chovot*, meaning wide places, refers to the room God made for the ancestors of Isaac to dwell in the land. The fact that the text goes into as much trouble to name the wells that Isaac found emphasizes the role that water plays in the life of Isaac and his family.

The verse in *Z'chor Av* that connected Isaac to water teaches us a great deal about the scarcity of water (as well as many other natural resources) and our need to collaborate with others in order to share then. Isaac's beginning is due to Abraham's willingness to share some of his highly valuable water with strangers wandering into his tent- a lesson from which all of us can learn a great deal. In the next verse, although God threatens to make Abraham spill Isaac's blood like the sacrificial lamb, Isaac is spared. His blood is too precious to be spilt, and God taught a lesson of deep humility through this order even though the price is unbearable for Abraham. And finally, in the last verse, Isaac must feel the heat on his back and the blisters on his hands as he digs up wells that his enemies blocked up with dirt. How would have things have been different if this precious resource had been shared equally between people, just as Abraham had first shared with the strangers in his tent? And today as Syria, Lebanon, and Israel threaten to cut each other off from their shared water source, what can we learn from this *piyyut* about Isaac? Maybe it is time to think about collaboration rather than competition as we enter the era of decreasing resources in which we all are responsible for the wellbeing of our planet.

> Remember the one (Jacob) who with staff in hand crossed the river Jordan
> He dedicated his heart and rolled a stone from the face of the well
> He wrestled with the prince of mixed fire and water
> Thus did you promise to be with him through fire and water.

The *paytan* introduces Jacob to us by hinting at one of the most distressing moments in Jacob's life.[15] In chapter 32 of *Bereshit*, Jacob is about to confront his brother Esau for the first time since he stole his birthright and fled for his life. Jacob decides to divide his family in half, and uses the Jordan River to do so. He situates half his family on one side and the other on the opposite bank, for if Esau kills off his family at least the other half will be saved. He uses water to protect his family, and thanks God for protection in verse 11: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which you have shown to your servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan River; and now I have become two camps."

Water begins as protection for Jacob but turns quickly into a life changer. In *Bereshit* 29:10, years before Jacob confronts Esau, Jacob "saw Rachel the daughter of Laban…and rolled the stone away from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban." Jacob conjures a huge amount of strength in order to give water to the flock of the woman he will end up marrying. This act of kindness also determines the next 20 years[16] of his life! Laban, who sees both Jacob's desire for Rachel and his immense amount of strength, promises Jacob Rachel's hand in exchange for seven years of labor. Ultimately, as we all know, Laban tricks Jacob after seven years by giving him Leah

[15] Ibid.
[16] See Genesis 31:41. Jacob serves Laban 14 years for Rachel and Leah and 6 years for the flock of sheep.

instead- thus getting another seven years of labor out of Jacob in exchange for Rachel. Water becomes the determinate for Jacob's future.

The next two stanzas allude to the famous story of Jacob wrestling with the angel.[17] In the Talmud Yirushalmi, Rabbi Avon says, "The angel himself is half water and half fire. Therefore, he guarded him against fire and water."[18] When Jacob wins the wrestling match against the angel, he is forevermore protected from both fire and water. However, the fight also wounds Jacob and he must walk with a limp the remainder of his days. In this way, the *paytan* shows that Jacob's connection to water is primarily through the challenges Jacob overcomes in his life and the reminders that remain once he has overcome them.

Jacob's life, which is full of familial strife and hardship, is poignantly touched in many ways by water. Water is an analogy for the barrier that God places before him- a barrier he must overcome again and again. And yet, water is also an analogy for God's place alongside Jacob, no matter how many mistakes he makes. Water accompanies him along his journey as God accompanies him, and "promises to be with him through fire and through water."

> Remember the basket made of reeds that was drawn from the water (Moses)
> They say: He drew water for the flock
> At the time when your people thirsted for water
> He struck the rock and water came out.

The next verse harkens back to one of the most memorable stories of our biblical canon. The *paytan* refers to Moses and his rescue from the river by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses is saved from a sure death sentence because of the river that brings him into the

[17] Ibid 204.
[18] Talmud Yirushalmi, Rosh Hashanah 2:4.

hands of royalty: a safe haven where no one can do him harm. More than that, water determines Moses' naming: "And she called him Moses; and she said, 'Because I drew him out of the water.'" Moses' name reflects his deep essential connection to water, and his rescue from the riverbank is only the beginning.

Just as Moses is *drawn* out of the water as a baby, so does he *draw* water for a flock of sheep in the land of Midian after his escape from Egypt as a young man. This action is the precursor to his entire adulthood before he travels back to Egypt in order to rescue the Israelites from slavery and lead them across the Sea of Reeds. Due to this action, Moses becomes deeply integrated into the Midianite tribe, where he becomes a shepherd and marries Tzipporah, the daughter of Yitro. I find it interesting, however, that the *paytan* does not mention Moses splitting the Sea of Reeds and leading the people through to safety. Moses has power over water from the very beginning of his life- and this power is because of the direct connection Moses has with God.

In the next stanza, the *paytan* references *Shemot* 17:6 and the striking of the rock to produce water.[19] Moses and his staff both have the power to save the people of Israel from drowning and from dehydration- through water, Moses has the power to save the people of Israel.

This beautiful *piyyut* that accompanies *T'fillat Geshem* can provide a theological structure through which we, as modern Jews, can view and participate in the environmental movement. Each of the four paragraphs gives us a clear example of how we can connect to God, our planet, and to each other. For Abraham, water represents pure and true faith. God and Abraham have a bond that is unlike any other in the Torah-

[19] *N'tiv Binah* 104.

Abraham follows God like a willing servant, and would give everything (including his first born son) to please God. Despite the truly difficult obstacles God places in front of Abraham, his faith allows him to flow over them as a river would flow over a rock in its path. We, as members of a truly unique and beautiful religion, can take on this aspect of Abraham's deep faith in God and his path and apply it to our environmental quest. We must have the will to change and the faith that we *can* change. There are some truly daunting tasks that lie ahead of humanity- if our planet is to continue to sustain life, we must learn to live within its boundaries. This will mean giving up a way of life that has become fully engrained in our modern day culture and personality- and through all of that, we must maintain our faith that we have the power deep within ourselves to change.

We learn from Isaac that water is a powerful resource that can promote both peace and strife amongst neighbors. Because of Abraham's kindness, water is a symbol of the miracle of birth. And yet, because the Philistines attempt to ruin the Israelite people by stopping up their wells due to Isaac's overwhelming success in their territory, water also becomes a symbol of strife and greed amongst neighbors. We must take this as a lesson to share our precious resources, use them wisely, and to not led greed govern our politics. We must collaborate with our neighbors and ease the strife between us regarding shared natural resources. Isaac also teaches us to be humble: the world works in a way that we do not always understand. For Isaac could never understand why his father agreed to spill his blood like water or how his birth came to be because of a shared drink with strangers. Despite our immense scientific knowledge there is no easy solution to this unpredictable issue that we now face. Our fate is a mystery, and we do not like mysteries. We must have enough humility to accept that there are things we will never understand.

Jacob teaches us the power of action through his relationship with water. Jacob uses water to protect his family. He gives his wife-to-be water at the well and he wrestles with the angel of fire and water. From Jacob we learn that action can change us and those around us. Each of us can be an agent of change. When Jacob moves the stone away from the well in order to provide water for a strangers' flock, little did he know that his entire future had been altered by that one action. Being just one person in a world of billions seems overwhelming, especially when fighting for a cause that many seem to shrug off. Jacob shows us that every action, even the smallest one, can be an agent of change. We as individuals do have power to create and live a more sustainable life on our planet- and although the struggle is great, the potential remains strong.

Moses, our prophet, uses water to illustrate God's power. Through him we see how water is a source of life and of death, of sustenance and of destruction. God yields great authority through the manipulation of water- and the Israelites recognize this power through the actions of Moses. Moses teaches us to protect our natural resources. To me, this verse can remind us of the beauty and power that exists in the natural world. As Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote, "As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. We will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation."[20] Our planet is an incredible and diverse orb of true power, a planet that can teach us so much. We can find determination in knowing that we are partners with God in the act of creation that renews itself every day, and continue to appreciate the wonder and power contained in our world.

[20] Heschel, Abraham Joshua. Man is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux: New York, 1976.

In sum, the four attributes of faith, joint action, humility, and the true power of our earth can help guide our Jewish environmentalist movement. With inspiration and faith in our text and our belief in a God whose true glory is reflected in this incredible planet every day, we can become partners in creation rather than its destroyers. Through grassroots organizations and action in our synagogues and communities we can teach each other how to share and preserve resources, and use what we were given with resourcefulness and with gratitude. A greater sense of humility will remind us that we are not in control and that we do not understand everything. It will remind us of God's power and glory and will teach us that anything we destroy is destroying part of God's world. Our planet is an astonishing place that deserves our respect and our honor.

We need action and humility, faith and power to guide us towards a more sustainable future, and our Jewish canon is ripe with texts that can help us along that path. Whether it be through the poetry and beauty of Psalm 104, or in the *Mishnah* and the prescribed fasting of the people when rain did not come, or the *piyyut Z'chor Av* for *T'filat Geshem* that shows the many ways our biblical ancestors interacted with the natural world, we can use the messages of our text to propel the Jewish environmental movement. It is to that movement and the potential of music to galvanize its participants that we now turn.

Chapter II
The Power of Music in the Civil Rights Movement As a Model for Jewish Environmentalism

As shown in the previous chapter, Judaism provides a solid textual foundation for environmentalism. The texts of Psalm 104 and *T'filat Geshem* are essentially the songs of our past upon which the natural world was reflected and our cultural identity, desires, and anxieties were built. These epic poems may have at one point been set to a known melody that inspired a fierce devotion to God and love of creation. In modern times they provide, in addition to many other Jewish texts not sourced in this paper, the background in which text can and should be used to galvanize a movement for change. When powerful texts that speak to the heart of our desires and concerns are paired with powerful melodies, the group dynamic can become so influential it creates a paradigm shift that allows a culture to reverse previous beliefs.

The strongest example of this concept is the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. While the early stages of the movement began in the courtrooms with "the landmark Brown v. the Board of Education[21] decision," the emotional core of the grassroots movement was music.[22] Music was the heart and soul of the movement; it reinforced the "social relationship in which it was made" and embodied solidarity when believers in the cause came together to sing.[23] As Cordell Reagon[24] said, "Without these songs, you

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[21] Brown vs. Board of Education court case in 1954 established that segregated schools was unconstitutional.
[22] Peretti, Burton W. Life Every Voice: The History of African American Music. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2009. Page 143.
[23] Roy, William G. Reds, Whites and Blues: Social Movements, Folk Music, and Race in the United States. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010. page 205.

know we wouldn't be anywhere. We'd still be down on Mister Charley's plantation, chopping cotton for 30 cents a day."[25]

Civil Rights music emerged deeply influential in the movement due to three main factors: slavery, the church, and the melting pot. The vast majority of slaves who were brought to America were illiterate, and thus the "emerging culture they forged out of the wilderness drew primarily on oral traditions."[26] Stories and songs were the main mode of transmitting messages and cultural history while working in the fields of their slave masters. Not only did music teach the history and culture of black America, but it was the "saving grace…for blacks on the southern plantation."[27] Music provided comfort and solidarity to slaves, which was eventually transmitted to their strong religious life as well.

The seeds were sown for the budding Civil Rights movement in the chapels of the African American churches.[28] They served as the main meeting places for the movement where recruits were wooed and collective music was made.[29] In the early days of the movement, "before freedom songs were widely known and sung, it was religious music that bound the participants together in solidarity."[30] In fact, at the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955 the spiritual "Onward Christian Soldiers" became the anthem of

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[24] Cordell Hull Reagon (1943-1996) was an American singer who founded the Freedom Singers of the Student Non-Violent Coordination Committee (SNCC). He was arrested more than 30 times during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.
[25] Sanger, Kerran L. "When the Spirit Says Sing!" The Role of Freedom Songs in the Civil Rights Movement. New York: Garland Publishing, 1950. Page 29.
[26] Eyerman, Ron and Andrew Jamison. Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century. Cambridge: University Press, 1998. Page 49.
[27] Ibid 50.
[28] Ibid 97.
[29] Roy 183.
[30] Ibid 184.

solidarity against white oppression.[31] The community *was* the church- and the inspiration to fight for freedom was sown in the lyrics of the gospel hymns. From the very beginning, music and the need for social equality were intertwined to such an extent that almost every major demonstration was accompanied by communal singing.

In addition, communal singing was not seen as foreign and uncomfortable. It was a natural and spiritual way for communities of people to be together that had its roots in the cotton and tobacco fields of the south. The Protestant preachers used that cultural background to inspire music that was very familiar to most African Americans acting in the Civil Rights movement. When Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. began to develop programming in the 1950s to teach about non-violent resistance, he made freedom songs key tools for "building solidarity and instilling courage in the activists."[32] Religious institutions still remain the main sites in which Americans are socialized to sing loudly together- and in the religious setting musical participation is the goal rather than performance.[33]

The church also introduced styles of singing to the Civil Rights movement that made participation easy and rewarding. The "leader and response" or "call and response" method became the most popular way of singing songs.[34] The song leader would call out a phrase usually paired to a recognizable tune that would then be repeated by the audience. The words could easily be changed, and with a musically savvy audience harmonies were often added. Three fierce examples of this type of singing are "Oh, Freedom," "We Shall Overcome," and "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around," all

[31] Ibid 184.
[32] Peretti 144.
[33] Roy 185.
[34] Ibid 185, 199.

of which were used on long marches to Washington and during the Freedom Rides. The verses were easy to pick up and adaptable to many situations, making them "the most widely used songs in the movement."[35]

In addition to ways of singing, the church also provided a strong musical background for those who became the movement's top singers. Many of the great popular musicians who could be heard for decades on the radio were born and raised in African American churches; Guy Carawan and Aretha Franklin are just two examples. The capability for music of an oppressed minority to become a central force in pop culture relied on the "melting pot" of America. Once the music moved out of segregated black churches, the popularity of the music quickly spread through American culture. The music became more than a means of identification; it "helped build bridges between class and status groups, between blacks and white supporters, between rural and urban, northern and southern blacks."[36] In time the movement grew to include sit-ins and marches with protestors of all colors and backgrounds. The music from these subgroups of society mingled and began to integrate other genres such as the blues, Do Wop, and folk.

Despite expanding influences and the eventual broadcast and popularization of many classic Civil Rights songs, the music of the movement stayed lyrically simple. The songs continued to lend themselves to shared performance and "invited participation [through] simple repetitive choruses and rhyming couplets with an emotional and political content."[37] The lyrics continued to deal with universal themes of brotherhood

[35] Ibid 199.
[36] Eyermen and Jamison 98.
[37] Ibid 102.

and peace, and often did not point fingers at specific oppressors. Many of these songs still ring true today when we hear them- the struggles of human beings are not over. One such example is the famous ballad "We Shall Overcome:"

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,

We shall overcome some day.

Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,

That we shall overcome some day.

The classic Civil Rights hymn "We Shall Overcome" has a long and complex history deeply imbedded in the fight for equality. The exact origin of the song is debated, although is it said that the lyrics were first sung by Lucille Simmons while protesting during the tobacco workers' strike of 1946.[38] She may have based her song off a gospel hymn called "I'll overcome someday" written by Charles Tindley in 1901 but with different words. Zilphia Horton transcribed the song at the strike and eventually Guy Carawan and Pete Seeger of the Highlander Folk School[39] published the song and copyrighted it as "We Shall Overcome" in 1960.

"We Shall Overcome" gained its popularity because of its immediate accessibility during long sit-ins, protest marches, jail sentences, and prayer vigils. New verses were easily constructed due to its simple meter and rhyming structure, and new lyrics often "spontaneously evolved out of a group experience."[40] For example, additional verses to the song include "The truth shall make us free someday," "We are not afraid/We shall

[38] Peretti 145.
[39] The Highlander Folk School was a grassroots activist training center in Tennessee that transcribed countless civil rights protest songs.
[40] Spencer 84.

overcome someday," and "We'll walk hand in hand/…someday."[41] Guy Carawan described a situation when arrested students were forced to sit in the dark while police searched their bags. A young black woman began singing "We Shall Overcome" but changed the lyrics to "We are not afraid/We are not afraid today." As the song was changed to fit their specific situation, the singers were "able to stand firm when confronted by white pressure and intimidation tactics."[42]

The song also embodied the collective language of the movement. Many freedom songs used "we" rather than "I," for when the "group overcame, so did the individual."[43] As the crowds of protestors raised their voices in song, the lyrics reflected the goals of the group. "We Shall Overcome," however, also uses the first person in the lyrics. The line "Oh, deep in my heart *I* do believe" celebrates the individual in addition to the collective. The song recognizes that "for us to overcome, each individual must be convinced of the inevitability of the goal."[44] The energizing protest thus propelled them forward, encouraged by the power of the individual to create the group necessary to fight for equality and freedom.

Although "We Shall Overcome" rose in popularity during protests, it appeared in popular culture only a decade later. Martin Luther King Jr. used the song in his last speech before his assassination on April 4th, 1968. President Lyndon Johnson used the words "we shall overcome" in his speech to congress to approve the Voting Rights Bill of

[41] Ibid.
[42] Sanger 47.
[43] Ibid 85.
[44] Sanger 80.

1965.[45] In addition, the song was used in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and in the Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland. Bruce Springsteen even sang the song in 2012 after the terror attacks in Norway in the summer of 2011.

In no other movement has music "enjoyed such a pervasive presence."[46] The music of the Civil Rights movement still rings true to us in modern day America- the voice of the social activist can still be heard in those melodies. There is much to learn about the power of music to galvanize a social movement through this moving example. Each person who joined in the singing was convinced that his or her role was essential to the success of the movement. Music roused the protestors to increase commitment and lend support to their cause, despite hardship.

Just as in churches, synagogue music can provide an exceptional context to inspire change in our society. The church was the epicenter of inspiration and drive for the Civil Rights Movement, and so may the synagogue become an epicenter for the environmental movement. On the one hand, prayer services provide a venue for congregants to sing together about their passions and to find inspiration in gathering in a common place. In addition, much of Jewish liturgy can aid us in understanding how we can exist more in tandem with the natural world (as I discussed in regards to Psalm 104 and *T'filat Geshem).*

Liturgical music in the synagogues defines time, space, and emotion; it opens doors to prayer for those who enter the temple. The music brings the ancient text of our

[45] Sanger 29. Sanger notes that because of Johnson's use of the text in his speech without establishing common ground with the blacks, the song lost popularity among African American protestors and eventually lost its status as the theme song of the Civil Rights movement.
[46] Roy 181.

people to life, and even "the simplest folk melody can become a powerful vehicle for prayer."[47] Music, when composed with taste and dignity, can bring renewed meaning to a text that has been long forgotten (a classic example being Debbie Friedman's setting of *Mi Shebeirach*). In addition, ancient texts and melodies can inspire us even in a modern day context. Almost every congregant on *Erev Yom Kippur* will be moved by the familiar melody of *Kol Nidre* that has been sung in some form for almost one thousand years. Music is how we, as Jews, express our devotion to God, our need for healing, our praise and thanksgiving. It is our vehicle to the holy realm.

Rabbi Larry Hoffman views shared musical experiences as the essential ingredient to worship.[48] A group that hears and/or sings a musical setting together feels a sense of community and emerges as a unified whole. Such was the same experience of the protestors sitting in jails in the 1960s singing "We Shall Overcome." Prayer is a shared experience that can and should be expanded to the realm of action. Our liturgy should be used more explicitly to unite this movement and allow us to feel, as Martin Luther King Jr. said, "the urgency of now."

Luckily, there are many Jewish institutions that promote environmentalism and outdoor education. Umbrella programs like Hazon support smaller organizations, such as Wilderness Torah in Berkley, California and Eden Village Camp in New York, and the Teva Learning Center that teach young people and upcoming Jewish leaders how to incorporate fundamental environmental ethics into their lives. Yet, these blossoming organizations that do incredible work in many sectors are only beginning to realize the

[47] Friedmann, Jonathan L. Social Functions of Synagogue Song. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2012. page 15.
[48] Friedmann, Jonathan L. and Brad Stetson, editors. Jewish Sacred Music and Jewish Identity. St. Paul: Paragon House, 2008. Page 3.

importance of music to stimulate their cause. In the next section, I will take the opportunity to report on conversations I have had with people involved in these educational efforts and delve more deeply into how music is used (or neglected) in their teaching.

It is with hope that I challenge us to see the history and development of music in the Civil Rights movement applied to the Jewish environmental movement. We too can purvey the importance of this message through Jewish text and music, and eventually that persuasion might translate to the main stream. In the Civil Rights movement, the "changing fortunes of the movement and the moral of its participants could have been gauged by the intensity of the singing at meetings."[49] If we can use the intensely spiritual singing at our synagogues, camps, and organizations to support a cause that is worth fighting for, then we are using what the music from the Civil Rights movement has taught us. Synagogues can come alive through music that is coupled with the urgency of an issue that affects all of us! In so doing, we will establish that we are a group of people capable of *overcoming* the greatest threat that faces humanity and the planet in our days. In the next chapter, I will relay conversations I have had with current leaders of this movement. Through these conversations they reveal on the ground examples of their successes, struggles, and expectations for the future.

[49] Ibid 182.

Chapter III
A Look into the Passions and Frustrations of Jewish Environmental Leaders

The leaders of the Jewish environmental movement find themselves at a crossroads. Many feel a strong sense of Jewish identity backing up their claim that Jews can and should propel the ideals of sustainability forward, and nonetheless they encounter an overwhelming sense of apathy from the Jewish community. In this next chapter, I will share interviews I held with some of our great environmental leaders.[50] Through their passions, successes, and failures I hope to glean how to propel the forward motion necessary to exhilarate the Jewish community towards sustainability. I will also discuss to what extent text and music has played a role in their leadership and how they see education as a key player in the future of the movement.

Nigel Savage and Hazon

Over the past ten years, an incredible number of Jewish environmental organizations have surfaced. I consider the two major players the Washington D.C. based Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) and Hazon, a New York based organization that provides transformational experiences that create sustainable communities in the Jewish world and beyond. COEJL plays a crucial role advocating for green legislation in our nations' capitol and spends much of its time expressing a Jewish response to issues of climate change. While this organization does incredible work and is worth spending time discussing, for the purposes of this paper I have decided to focus on Hazon because it provides programming and resources to Jewish communities who are

[50] Please see the interview protocol on page vi of the appendix.

looking to become more sustainable. The website advertises Jewish environmental bike rides, food and learning conferences at Isabella Freedman, Tu B'shvat programs, and various resources to use in the synagogue and classroom.

One of the most impressive things about Hazon, in my opinion, is their statement of purpose- what they call their "Theory of Change."[51] From what it says on this webpage, Hazon's mission is not solely to create a sustainability culture in Jewish life but to foster the *community* that will then rally towards that goal. The rich customs of Jewish history, text, and tradition become the cultural backdrop to create change. Hazon realizes that without essential human connections forged through shared experiences (as occurred in the Civil Rights movement) the environmental movement will never have a chance to really blossom.

Hazon's "theory of change" presents ten objectives they aim to accomplish during every program the organization initiates. They can be divided into three categories (in my opinion): Jewish values, experience, and community. Hazon hopes that each program will present information that will speak to people "where they are at" and then push them to integrate that new knowledge into many areas of their lives. They do this through text and a "vibrant approach to Jewish tradition" that includes many different ways of practice. Since merging with Isabella Freedman and Teva Learning Center in January of 2014, Hazon is the proud sponsor of many retreats that allow Jews that in-depth immersive experience the mission statement describes. Program offerings include Torah Yoga, Shabbat on the farm, sustainable food tours, and holiday celebrations with an environmental twist.

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[51] "Theory of Change." *Hazon.* Springthistle Design, 2011. Web. 10 December 2013. http://www.hazon.org/about/theory-of-change/.

Then, Hazon challenges people to really get involved. The organization values total immersion because it creates connections between people and a strong desire to continue a practice year after year, even if it changes over the course of time. They encourage participants to become stake-holders in Hazon by helping to fund this type of learning and programming for others. Finally, Hazon stresses the importance of community in their mission. They claim to be an inclusive group that opens the doors for new leadership while maintaining a high level of integrity in their programming. And now, with the inclusion of Teva and Isabella Freedman in their mission, they can reach an even wider audience.

I recently had the opportunity to interview Nigel Savage, the director of Hazon. He is originally from Manchester, England and founded Hazon in 2000. Nigel's first act as the director of the fledgling organization was to initiate a Jewish environmental bike ride that went from Seattle, Washington to the White House. Since then, both Hazon and Nigel have received international acclaim and attention from the EPA, the Forward 50, and the Sierra Club.[52] My first question for Nigel was to describe himself as an environmentalist- to which he quickly retorted that while he does consider himself one, he would "almost never say that."[53] He believes that the greater American community feels a sense of guilt around that word. Since his goal is to make a difference and to inspire others to join the cause, he refers to Hazon's mission as his primary one as well:

[52] "Nigel Savage." *Hazon*. Springthistle Design, 2011. Web. 10 December 2013. http://www.hazon.org/about/staff/nigel-savage/.
[53] Savage, Nigel. Personal Interview. 8 October 2013.

"to create a healthier and more sustainable Jewish community and world for everybody."[54]

When I questioned Nigel about the obstacles he has encountered during the last thirteen years running Hazon, he explained that there is actually a culture shift that needs to happen if we are to truly become sustainable communities. In his opinion, we must move away from American culture and towards Jewish culture.

> "Contemporary western society is very much built around rights, and the international need for rights. 'What am I going to get and what are my rights?' And Jewish tradition literally has no sense of that. Jewish tradition is interested in *mitzvot*, obligation, and *malchut shamayim*. And in quite deep language Jewish tradition is an incredibly complex ecosystem. So I see the world through Jewish terms, and I think the world is very wise."[55]

Nigel brings up the idea of a complex ecosystem to express how Judaism is a direct reflection of the natural world. Each person is essential to the whole because of the unique opinions and gifts they bring to the table. A Judaism that is diverse and appeals to many types of personalities is a strong Judaism, and in this way reflects the stability of the natural world.

This is why Nigel pointed out that even if every Jew in the world bought and drove a Prius, it would not make that much of a difference to the planet. However, if Jews focus on one core value from our tradition that could potentially influence the wider culture, we might be getting somewhere. Nigel calls it "The *Shmita* Project." *Shmita* is the Biblically mandated 'Sabbatical Year' of rest and release, when "agriculture and commerce were simultaneously re-adjusted to enable a more equitable, just and healthy

[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

society, economy and environment."[56] This concept includes the rest of the land from annual farming, a release of all debts between human beings, and a reliance on the perennial and stored food system. Though *shmita* is still practiced to some extent in Israel, Nigel is looking at the bigger picture of what *shmita* could teach the progressive Jewish community.

According to Nigel, the laws of *shmita* laid down in the Torah and Talmud could revolutionize the way we relate to the planet, our food system, and each other.

> "To the extent that one of the ways that one changes the world is through leadership, putting *shmita* back on the agenda of the people, and in due course the world, is a really interesting contribution we can make to help us create a more sustainable world. How do we relate to cycle of rest? What does it mean that one year in seven we would get more of our calories from perennials rather than annuals? What does it mean that one year in seven we erase some debt and banish inequality?"[57]

What Nigel reflects here is a perfect example of Hazon's "theory of change." He calls for a paradigm shift that is based in Jewish text, promotes community equality and engagement, and gives communities a chance to empower leaders that could potentially influence the larger world. However, there are challenges to the *shmita* project as well as many other programs that Hazon initiates. Nigel spoke of the "lust for everything" that many Jewish communities have today. "We are unwilling to restrain ourselves,"[58] he says, which provides a significant challenge to the project.

In addition, Nigel sees the disconnect between being Jewish once a week at synagogue and the daily lives of congregants as one of the largest issues facing Hazon and the Jewish environmental movement at large:

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[56] "Shmita Project." *Hazon.* Springthistle Design, 2011. 10 December 2013. http://www.hazon.org/resource/shmita-project/.
[57] Nigel Savage, personal interview.
[58] Ibid.

"We've often lived very bifurcated lives. One thing is religion, which is in synagogue and it's the weekend and it's very formal, and then there's the rest of our life where we're going to work and school and so on. And I think one of the lessons of contemporary religious environmentalism is that religion isn't about how you behave in synagogue. It's about how we hold ourselves in our lives. And as soon as you do that, you suddenly start to think, for example, about food and a whole range of things that in general we've become disconnected with."[59]

I believe this is Nigel's greatest message to us. He challenges us both as individuals and faith communities to see how our *halachah*, text, and traditions can inform our day-to-day lives. And, aided by this knowledge, we can form deeper connections to each other and to our planet in order to create a sustainable existence on earth.

Simone Lindenbaum and Eden Village Camp

Eden Village Camp, located in Putman Valley New York, is a Jewish green summer camp that has a mission to create a more "environmentally sustainable, socially just, and spiritually connected world."[60] The camp is funded partly by Hazon and UJA Federation of New York, and has a similar mission as Hazon. The camp assures a three-tiered model for engaging campers in a sustainable Jewish experience: through community, learning, and action. Vivian and Yoni Stadlin, who dreamed of an overnight camp with environmental values since 2008, founded the camp in 2010. It has been growing ever since and now has more than 300 campers each summer.

In order to learn more about the camp's values, programs, and history I interviewed Simone Lindenbaum, the director of programming. Simone worked at

[59] "Conversation with Nigel Savage." *YouTube, n.p.* 30 November 2013. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IpDQQaCJfI.
[60] "Mission & Vision." *Eden Village Camp*, n.p. 10 December 2013. http://edenvillagecamp.org/about-us/mission-vision/.

various other sustainability projects, including the urban Adamah Fellowship and the Findhorn Eco Village in Scotland, before joining the Eden Village team in 2011. Simone's passion, due to her time working on farms all over the world, is in food production and distribution. Her Jewish environmentalism is also deeply rooted in this issue. In fact, her most exciting moments at the Eden Village camp is seeing them "get to the farm and getting their hands super dirty…because it's so exciting to harvest a potato!"[61] She told me a story about the first time she ever connected her environmentalism with her Judaism.

> "As a Jew getting ready for *Rosh Hashanah*, you are supposed to sort through yourself and take stock of what you have and things you want to change. We were also supposed to be sorting through the squash at that time. I remember feeling like it was so easy to connect what's going on at the farm and what's going on in Judaism. And maybe that's a stretch, but there are moments like that where I felt like 'I'm sorting through the squash and also through myself' and I used that to approach the coming holidays."[62]

For Simone, this realization translated into working at a Jewish summer camp with similar values. When I asked her what the one thing campers should come away with after a summer at Eden Village Camp, she said, "the product here is love." To her, their biggest goal is to "foster love between the campers and the earth"[63] and have a fun time doing it.

> "You are encouraged to find the most amazing things about each other. We also have a low-sarcasm zone. We want the kids to be their genuine true selves. And when you have so much love, it extends to the earth and noticing the interconnectedness between every single thing. Like that tree and that rock and you and me and we're all made up of the same stuff and we're all together in love."[64]

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[61] Lindenbaum, Simone. Personal Interview. 8 October 2013.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

While Simone expresses the values of acceptance through programming at Eden Village, it was still unclear to me to what extent this reflects a specifically environmental message. Simone seems more concerned with ideas of love and peace rather than sustainability. She is, however proud of what Eden Village Camp has accomplished over the last three years since its inception. The campers have a high return rate and often come back for programs during the off-season. The staff works year-round to create engaging programs and *t'filah* that will inspire the campers to act with love towards each other and the earth when they return to their school lives. She hopes that they bring back that sense of humility to their home communities, and she knows that the camp fosters extremely deep friendships amongst the kids.

In addition to the *t'filah* and programming the camp provides, they also have "rockin' song sessions" after every meal. Some can last up to half an hour and include a wide range of music. Simone stressed that they never have "canned" music at camp, and the campers are not allowed to bring phones or iPods with them over the summer.[65] "It's always just a huge party. The director, Yoni, leads these session and they're totally incredible. Kids will grab a drum or bring their sax, and everyone else is just dancing around. We have our own tunes to *brich rachamana* (the blessing after the meal in Aramaic) that are all really fun and upbeat."[66] The Eden Village songs can be found on their website and through their Israeli music director, Pesach Stadlin. Simone spoke of how they are carefully chosen to send the messages of love to stewardship to the campers. I will comment further on the music later in this chapter.

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

Simone claims a connection to earth-based Judaism through farming and Teva education and finds that it influences her daily life. As she interacts with the campers, and sees the affect of caring and stewarding the earth has on them, she continues to be convinced that Judaism has much to teach about our relationship to the earth and to each other. Eden Village is beginning to provide that kind of connection for its campers, as it grows and continues to decide what principles to impart upon its students by the end of each summer. I would challenge her, however, to think even more deeply about this. I would hope that Eden Village could add an environmental spin on their daily *t'filah*, including prayers that may not be in vogue in the progressive movement (such as the second paragraph of the *sh'ma* and *tachanun*) but have a good message for young people interested in sustainability. While it is fabulous that campers see the hard work that goes into food production, it would be wonderful to go that extra step and study a text about *kashrut* or *shmita*. I would hope that as Eden Village grows in size it will also add more Jewish depth to its programming.

Aitan Grossman and KidEarth

The first line on the KidEarth website is: "I am a 12 year-old boy who likes music and doesn't like global warming."[67] When Aitan Grossman was preparing for his bar mitzvah, he decided to do what he could to send the message that global warming needed to be halted. He formed a band with some of his friends and wrote a song called "100 Generations," had it recorded, and then set about spreading the word.[68]

[67] "KidEarth." *KidEarth*. n.p., 2011. 11 December 2013. http://kidearth.us/Site/KidEarth.html

[68] The lyrics to "100 Generations" can be found at the end of this paper.

Aitan reached out to other kids his age all over the world, which resulted in his song getting translated and performed in languages such as Venezuelan, Mandarin, French, Setswana (South Africa), and more. Many of the recordings are posted on his website, Kidearth.us. He has received hundreds of awards, including commendation from Robin Williams and Chevy Chase at the Friends of the Earth reception in San Francisco.

Now Aitan is a junior in high school. I contacted him via email, and he was able to reflect on the experience of creating KidEarth four years ago. He told me how he had never written a song, but already had a passion for piano and singing.

> "In retrospect, I knew next to nothing about how to write songs, so I took the process that made the most sense to my twelve-year-old self. "Writing songs" surely implied that you needed to do some writing first, so I wrote the lyrics. Next I came up with the rough instrumental part on the piano along with the melody. The difficult part came when I realized my lyrics didn't fit the melody, so the major part of the time it took to compose the song was finding ways to make the lyrics fit the melody."[69]

Next, he had to find a band. As a sixth grader with only a few friends, it took courage to reach out to older eight graders and ask them to join him. He was met with surprising excitement, however, and within weeks had recorded a perfected demo of "100 Generations." His next step was to promote his song and find students around the world to sing it. Soon enough he found himself on a flight to Botswana, where he met "twenty-five to thirty uniformed schoolchildren crammed abuzz in the front of the classroom"[70] at Sebako Primary School.

> "Teaching the students was an amazing experience. With the help of my dad who manned the rehearsal track player and several teachers who translated my instructions, we arrived at a record-worthy take as well as a track sung in Setswana composed by the students themselves that we later used in the song's outro. I was surprised that the

[69] Grossman, Aitan. Email interview. 24 August 2013.
[70] Ibid.

recording session had been such a smash success, considering that I had only a vague idea of what I was doing, but the students remained ebullient throughout."

Aitan's highest desire was to send a message to the world that "even kids can understand what's happening to the environment, and that it must stop"[71] for their own sake. To him, music seemed the natural medium to portray his message. Although Aitan did this project for his Bar Mitzvah, he unfortunately feels that Judaism has "little to do with his concern for the environment."[72] He claims that Moses could have never known what the future generations have done to our planet, and thus "the foundation of Judaism indeed says nothing to address our current situation." He does admit that the Torah calls for respect of the life around us, but he believes that Judaism falls short of what the world needs to learn regarding global warming.

Aitan is sadly not alone in this belief. Years of misconstrued information spread by the ideas of Lynn White Jr. in his 1967 essay (as mentioned in the introduction) have convinced many secular Jews and non-Jews that the Torah and Jewish traditions have nothing to teach us about how to treat the earth. This essay and many others have attempted to prove otherwise, and in the future, hopefully kids such as Aitan will feel that their desire to protect the planet is fueled by Judaism and the rich lessons it has to teach in this regard.

Aitan does recognize, however, the power music has to move people across cultures and boundaries. Through music he managed to encourage hundreds of kids across the globe to speak up to the older generations about a jeopardized future on this planet. Aitan has used the power of music to spread the message that youth all over the

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

world can get behind- and in so doing, has created lasting relationships and a high sense of integrity. However, there is a lesson to be learned from Aitan's experience. When Aitan proposed this idea as his Bar Mitzvah project, why did his clergy fail to provide him with a Jewish context for his environmentalism? If they had helped him make connections between these two worlds, maybe he would be more involved in Jewish life today. Since Bar Mitzvah projects are common or required elements of this right of passage in progressive synagogues, maybe more children in the new generation will want to express their sustainable practices through a project of this kind. We, as lay leaders and clergy alike, should welcome and encourage these missions and push our younger generation to strive for something that can be extremely impactful for hundreds of people. We can use Aitan as an example- he reached many lives through his cross-continental musical achievements!

Aitan, Simone, and Nigel all essentially have the same message: to use community to bring about change. While they all have their weaknesses and strengths, they are working hard to challenge the Jewish community to step up to the plate and make a difference.

Music in the Environmental Movement

Many key leaders of the environmental movement in America agree that music is central to the cause. Bill McKibben, in a brief interview over email, told me that the organization 350.org is constantly "trying to use music as much as [they] can."[73] He told me about dozens of songs that have been composed to help in the fight. In addition, the

[73] McKibben, Bill. Email interview. 4 November 2013.

Climate Reality Project founded by Al Gore teamed with Jack Johnson to create the "Guitar of Reality." Using beetle kill pine from Colorado, guitar maker Pepe Romero created a guitar to represent the battle against global climate change. The guitar represents the hundreds of acres of trees that have been killed by pine beetles, who can now survive the winter in Colorado because of rising temperatures. Jack Johnson, the famous singer-songwriter, took up the challenge to write and perform a song about climate change using The Guitar of Reality. The song is called "Ones and Zeros." The lyrics deal with the complexities of our participation in global climate change and our guilt associated with it:

And all the greatest of the heroes started jumping from the books
They started wearing ones and zeros
Looking more and more like crooks
They stole the sunlight from the future
Took a sip, drained half the glass, and put it back

And a lot of people like to have a feast
Not so many could stomach the killing
Lot of traffic on the streets, so who's really doing all the drilling
Keep on filling what can never be full
My imagination has got a hold on me

Many more popular artists such as Alanis Morissette and Michael Jackson have written and performed songs encouraging people to fight against climate change. Daniel Crawford, a cellist who studies environmental science at University of Minnesota, recently composed a "Song for our Warming Planet" that matches pitches to data from NASA reflecting the heightened global temperature since 1900.[74] These examples show the promise of change through music but lack the implication that a cultural shift must

[74] "Cellist Converts Climate Change Data Into A Haunting Musical Composition." *Huffington Post*, Huffington Post 2013. 10 December 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/29/daniel-crawford_n_3830294.html

occur for us to really enact a sustainable lifestyle. Pop songs are not enough to galvanize an entire nation to change their lifestyle, especially songs that only lament our mistakes and do not encourage or suggest new ways of living. For that, as Nigel Savage said, we need a religious doctrine that can guide us towards a more sustainable lifestyle. And music that backs up those messages could potentially unlock the key to enabling a paradigm shift.

Despite this need, the music circulating in the Jewish environmental movement also lacks, in my opinion, an integral Jewish message. The Eden Village camp CD, for instance, has songs that are engaging and sweet. Yet, most are in English, and the two or three that include Hebrew are translations from Rainbow Gathering[75] songs. A great example of this is *Adamah v'shamayim,* a song that has become a classic in camp settings. The lyrics are a direct translation from a Rainbow Gathering song, of which the composer is not known.

Though these songs all have positive messages, I am of the opinion that the camp leaders are not choosing songs that are as steeped in Jewish tradition as the rest of their programming. The lack of Jewish text signifies to me that there is much left to be desired in their song choices, and probably they have found that there is not much to choose from that is being written for this cause. Other than the blessings after the meal and the few songs that are translated into Hebrew, the songs are not distinctively Jewish. Sending a message to our youth that there is a musical basis for Jewish environmentalism is crucial to the fruition of the movement. These camp songs are not fulfilling their potential.

[75] The Rainbow Gatherings are temporary intentional community gatherings that promote peace, equality, and harmony. They provide an alternative to mainstream culture consumerism.

The key, in my opinion, is to show other Jewish professionals and congregants that there are inherent environmental messages in much of the text we already use in our *t'filot*. Just a few examples are Psalm 148 from *Birkat Hamazon*, Psalms 95 and 96 from *Kabbalat Shabbat*, the prayers *Ma'ariv Aravim* and *Yotzer Or* from the daily services, and *Nishmat Kol Chai* from the Shabbat morning service. This small sample exhibits the incredible wealth of understanding our ancient text has regarding our relationship to the planet.

So, why not use them? In researching my upcoming recital, I have found an enormous amount of Jewish music that already exists on this topic. Much of it could be used in services or programs to help underscore the imminence of this issue to the Jewish people. An example is the "Ecological Cantata" written by Charles Osborne of Temple Sinai in Toronto. In 1993, Adya Artz of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism prompted Cantor Osborne to contribute his musical talents to her ecological project. Zemer Chai premiered the piece at a gala event on October 17th, 1993 with their conductor Eleanor Epstein. The piece met great success, but has since fallen out of the known repertoire. Many more pieces of music like this must exist and hopefully will surface to aid our cause.

In the beginning of this thesis, *T'filat Geshem* and Psalm 104 served as guides towards a more sustainable future. The texts taught four essential components that must be present in this critical culture shift: humility, the recognition of the glory of God's creation, faith, and cooperative action. A deeper look at Civil Rights music taught that a movement steeped in powerful, engaging music can rally a group of people to feel both a personal and communal desire for change. Nigel Savage, Aitan Grossman, and Simone

Lindenbaum added the final essential ingredient: using programming that is steeped in Jewish text and history to build community based on respect for each other and the planet. We can use the knowledge of those that have come before us to establish coexistence with our planet rather than trying to maintain dominion over it. In Genesis 2:15 God places Adam and Eve into the Garden of Eden "*l'ovdah u'l'shomra,"* or to steward it and to guard it. We are but guests here on God's earth, and we must *become* those stewards and guards if life as we know it is to survive our destruction.

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Appendix

Appendix I
Translation of Psalm 104

1. Bless Adonai, my soul[1]; Adonai my God you are indeed great; You are clothed in glory and majesty[2].
2. You are wrapped[3] in light[4] like a garment[5]; and spread the sky like a tent-cloth[6].
3. Who covers heights in the waters[7]; who puts a chariot in the clouds; who wanders on the wings of the wind.
4. Who makes the wind his messengers; fiery flames are God's servants.
5. God establishes the earth on its foundations[8]; the world shall never totter.
6. The deep covers the earth like a glove; the water stood above the mountains[9].
7. They[10] fled at your blast[11]; at the sound of your thunder they scattered.
8. The mountains rose up, the valleys sunk down; unto the place you established for them.
9. You set boundaries that they shall not pass; they will not return to cover the earth[12].

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[1]The Hebrew for "bless" in command form.

[2] The sages say: "Before you created the world, you were great. After you created the world, you were *very* great: clothed in majesty." This does not refer to physical garments, thus, to an abstract spiritual garment- we are not able to express the endless ways in which God is great. Our sages say: "10 garments God put on when God created the world: glory, majesty..." (from Me'am Loez, Sefer T'hillim, p 155).

[3] The idea of light being wrapped has a few interpretations. One is that just as we wrap ourselves in a tallit before prayer, so too did God wrap up God's being in light on the first day of creation. Another interpretation is the idea that God's inner being is clothed by light, and the light that shines down upon us is a way to experience the presence of God through God's "outer garments."

[4] The psalmist begins with light- that is how creation began as well.

[5] This line in the psalm echoes Isaiah 40:22; "Who spreads out the heavens like a curtain; and stretches them like a tent to dwell in."

[6] Beginning with the verb "wrapping," the Psalmist uses the active participle to explain the actions of God (example: wrapping, stretching out, setting, walking, etc).

[7] A reference to the clouds which act as a covering to the upper chambers of God's realm.

[8] The psalmist has already mentioned the heavens, fire, air, and water. Now, only at the end of their description, does he reach the details of the earth (the "lowest" of the four elements). This verse is in direct connection to Job 26:7- "God hangs the earth upon nothing that so that it never falters." (From Me'am Lo'ez, p 156-7).

[9] As in Genesis 1:2- "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was on the face of the earth."

[10] The waters.

[11] As in Genesis 1:9- "And God said: 'Let the waters under heaven be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear.'"

10. Who sends springs to gush forth in rivers; they make their way between the mountains[13].
11. All the creatures of the field shall drink; the asses will be satiated[14].
12. The birds of the sky shall dwell near them; and shall sing from between the flowery branches.
13. You water the mountains from your heights[15]; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of your hands[16].
14. The hay blooms for the cattle; and it is the work of man[17] to take weeds and extract bread from the earth[18].
15. Wine shall cheer the hearts of humanity; make faces shine brighter than oil[19]; and bread sustains the heart of man[20].
16. The trees of Adonai shall be satiated; the cedars[21] of Lebanon which God planted.

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[12] As in Job 38:10- "To here you will come but no further, and hear will your proud waves be set back." Herein lies the miracle: God has set bounds on the sea, and never will they return to cover the entire earth. The mountains, valleys, and fields have a place amongst the waters.

[13] God tames the potentially destructive waters and with them provides water for the creatures who live on the earth. A destructive power becomes a life-giving one. (from Alter, p 364).

[14] God's power reaches to the untamed and the tamed- everything from wild beasts to humans who do God's will.

[15] The rain coming down from the celestial realm is complimentary to the springs that bubble up in the valley to give fresh water to the cattle (verse 10). In addition, the mountains are named specifically because they need more water than the lowlands (Me'am Lo'ez p 160).

[16] Echoes Genesis 1:9; the third day of creation. On this day the waters are tamed and plant life is created. God's waters quench the land, which then produces sustenance for humans. (Me'am Lo'ez, 161).

[17] The water causes plants to grows. Plants feed the cattle, and in turn cattle help humans to plow their fields and reap wheat to make bread. All of life can be traced back to God.

[18] Here the Psalmist shows the difference between humans and animals: God provides everything without question for animals. Humans, however, must learn to feed themselves. They must take what grows and create food from it that is suitable.

[19] The *mem* that precedes the word for oil is used to make a comparison- the face shines brighter *than* oil. (Alter, p 365).

[20] Translation taken from Alter, p 365. An interpretation of the verse: bread is needed to sustain humans and give vitality, but wine is just used to gladden the heart. Thus, God nourishes both the soul and the body. Another interpretation: Wine is mentioned first because on Shabbat we first bless the wine and then the bread. (Me'am Lo'ez, 162). The word used for man, *enosh*, is the lowest grade of man. The term connotes frailty- however, through bread, wine, and oil given by God that represent Torah, we are strengthened.

[21] Cedars are large trees that need a lot of water. Therefore we understand that God gives great amounts of nourishment to these trees and they are left unattended by humans.

17. You placed birds there to make their nests; the stork has made her house in the junipers[22].
18. The high mountains are for goats; the cracks are refuge for hares[23].
19. God made the moon to mark the seasons[24]; the sun knows when to set.
20. You[25] brought on darkness[26] and it was night-time[27]; during which all the animals of the forest creep.
21. The lions roar for their prey; they seek their food from God.
22. When the sun rises they return home; they shall crouch in their dens.
23. Then man goes out to do his work[28]; and labors until evening.
24. How great are your works, Adonai[29]! In wisdom you have made them all[30]; the Earth is full of your creations[31].
25. This sea is vast and wide[32]; where countless creatures beyond number stir[33]; the small and the large[34].
26. There the ships wander[35]; you created the Leviathan[36] to play with.
27. All of them turn to you; you give them their food when it is due.

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[22] The trees provide homes for birds and also food for humans and animals. God has provided sustenance and a home for all living creatures. (Me'am Lo'ez, 163).
[23] Everything has its place- every part of the earth gives refuge to creatures.
[24] The waxing and waning of the moon divides the year into months and establishes the calendar. Midrash says that this cycle of the moon is also seen in living creatures: we get more powerful until middle age when we decrease in ability until we die. However, as the moon cycles and get bigger again, creation is renewed even when we die.
[25] Hebrew switches to second person here: making the experience of night and day more personal because it is directed by God.
[26] Darkness is not just absence of light: the creatures of the world benefit from the sun's disappearance.
[27] Darkness is not a time of terror but a cycle controlled by God. (Alter, 365).
[28] Man and beast thus have their place: when the lions return to their dens, the people can come out to do their work. Each seeks sustenance at the appointed time.
[29] Refers to both the celestials orbs and the living things on Earth.
[30] Nothing exists by chance- everything was created to fulfill a certain purpose (Me'am Lo'ez 167).
[31] Verses 25 and 26 deal with the vastness of creations both on earth and in the sea.
[32] The literal Hebrew is "wide hands," which could have been a measurement used in the ancient world as the width between the left and right hand (Me'am Lo'ez, 168).
[33] Translation taken from Robert Alter, page 367. By using the Hebrew word *remes* we are reminded of the creation story- but this time the poet tells it from the human perspective.
[34] Here, the Psalmist contrasts the sea with the land. Though the land has many creatures, the sea had uncountable amount- and it is vast beyond measure. However, God has given humans the wisdom to build boats in order to get food from the sea.
[35] The sea is filled with the works of God but also the works of humankind.
[36]The Leviathan is described in the book of Job 40:25-32. This creature has no predators and can eat whatever it wants. There, it is jovial and happy to play with God, his King (Me'am Lo'ez 169).

28. You give it to them to gather up[37]; you open your hands and they are well satisfied[38].
29. If you hide your face they are terrified; take away their breath[39] and they perish; they return to dust[40].
30. If you sent them breath they are created; you renew[41] them on the face of the earth.
31. May the glory of God endure eternally; may Adonai rejoice in God's works[42]!
32. With a glance from God the earth trembles; with a touch the mountains smoke[43].
33. I shall sing to Adonai as long as I live; I shall sing to Adonai with all of my might[44].
34. May my conversation be pleasant for God; I will rejoice in Adonai.
35. May sinners[45] disappear from the Earth[46]; wicked shall be no more; bless Adonai, my soul; Hallelujah!

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[37] Although we are given food we also must work hard for it. We must gather it. We are not given anything for free. And, when there is a drought, we must gather food slowly.
[38] This phrase is usually associated with an abundant rain.
[39] Literally, their spirit- but the background of Gensis argues for "the sense of 'breath' because it is God's breath there that brings life into being." (Alter, 367)
[40] Everything is in God's command- reminiscent of themes from *Un'taneh Tokef*. Death afflicts all creatures but there are always others who will come after them.
[41] New creatures are born, and through them creation is renewed- for they have never before walked the earth (Me'am Lo'ez 172).
[42] The conclusion of the psalm begins here: the Psalmist is wrapping up with praise to God.
[43] This passage is reminiscent of the revelation at Sinai. God need only look at the earth for it to tremble and feel God's wrath. When humans are evil, the earth is punished; humans witness the wrath of the creator through changes in the natural world. However, we also feel trembling during revelation. The earth gives us a physical reaction to God's presence- is it the vehicle through which we communicate with God.
[44] All creatures were created equal but humans were given a soul as well: therefore, this line can be translated as "I will sing praise to my God *for what is more*"- for that which is given to me extra as a human being.
[45] The Talmud says that R. Meir had neighbors who disturbed him, and he wished for their death. His wife, Bruriah, used this text to claim that sins should be banished from the earth rather than sinners.
[46] This is the first time ideas of justice have entered the poem. Robert Alter says this could be a "an editorial added gesture of piety" (Alter 368).

Appendix II
Translation of *T'filat Geshem*

Remember the father (Abraham) who followed you like water
You blessed him like a tree planted near streams of water[47]
You protected and saved him from fire and from water
You cared for whatever he sowed next to all water.

For his sake, do not refuse water.

Remember the birth (Isaac) that was predicted over a little water
You told his father to slay him, to spill his blood like water
He also was anxious to poor his heart out like water
He dug and found wells of water.

In his righteousness grant abundant water.

Remember the one (Jacob) with staff in hand crossed the river Jordan
He dedicated his heart and rolled a stone from the face of well
He wrestled with the prince of mixed fire and water
Thus did you promise to be with him through fire and water

For his sake, do not refuse water.

Remember the basket made of reeds that was drawn from the water (Moses)
They say: He drew water for the flock
At the time when your people thirst for water
He struck the rock and water came out.

In his righteousness grant abundant water.

Remember the Temple priest who bathed five time in water
He wandered and washed his hands in holy water
He read and sprinkled purified water
He was kept far away from the reckless people like water.

For his sake, do not refuse water.

Remember twelve tribes that you brought across the spigots of water
For them you sweetened the bitterness of water
Their offspring spilled blood for you like water
Turn to us for our souls are surrounded by water.

In their righteousness grant abundant water.

For you are Adonai our G-d, who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall.

For a blessing and not for a curse: Amen
For life and not for death: Amen
For plenty and not for scarcity: Amen

Appendix III
Interview Templates

Questions for Nigel Savage and Bill McKibben:

1. Describe yourself as an environmentalist. What are you most passionate about?
2. If you could identify a moment in your life when you decided to be an environmental activist, what would it be? What was it like?
3. How does Judaism inform in your environmentalism? What does it mean to be a Jew and an environmentalist?
4. In what ways are you trying to inspire others to have the same passion to protect our planet? What have been your challenges and your successes?

Questions for Simone Linenbaum:

1. Describe yourself as an environmentalist. What are you most passionate about?
2. How does Judaism inform your environmentalist? How did you come to work for a Jewish environmental organization?
3. Tell me a little bit about the musical programming at your institution. How is it used to purvey the ideals of protecting the planet? What are some of the most popular songs sun there?
4. Has there been a particularly difficult part of teaching environmentalism? What seems hard for your students to grasp?
5. If you could send your students away with one big idea, what would it be? What have been the struggles and successes in teaching that message?

Questions for Aitan Grossman:

1. Aitan, after experiencing Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* you were inspired to take action. This inspiration led you to write an incredible song. Would you share your song-writing process with me? What was it like to create this music with your friends and family?
2. What has it been like to teach the song to other kids around the world?
3. What kind of message are you hoping to send to the world through this song?
4. I read that you prepared this project as your Bar Mitzvah *tikkun olam* project. What about your environmentalism is Jewish? Do you think that your Judaism has influenced your passion for healing our world?
5. What has been the most exciting moment of this project for you? And what are your hopes for the future?

Appendix IV
Environmental Tachanun Service[48]
Compiled by Rachel Rhodes for HUC-JIR Kallah, Summer 2013

Environmental Tachanun

Air pollution
Biosphere destruction
Consumerism
Deforestation
Exploitation of the poor and weak
Future generations at risk
Gluttony
Habitat Destruction
Ignoring the signs of climate change
Justifying selfish actions
Knowing I'm part of the problem but not changing my lifestyle
Littering
Monoculture farming
Narcissism
Overpopulation
Pollinator Decline
Quantity over Quality
Resource depletion
Soil contamination
Taking more than we need
Urban sprawl
Vulnerable species
Water pollution
X-extinction of species
Years of apathy
Zero respect for all that was created before us

[48] This service was written for a specifically environmental *mincha* service. I compiled it using the three parts of *tachanun* as a guide, but changed the texts. The acrostic is the first part of *tachanun* and should be said with the forehead against the forearm. The second, a quote from Rambam, should be said sitting upright. The quote from Dr. Borowitz is the last section, and should be said standing.

The way to come to love and fear God is by contemplating God's amazing words and creations and seeing the infinite wisdom expressed in them. This will bring one to love God and want to praise and glorify God. One will experience tremendous longing and yearning to know God's great name.
In the words of David, ‘My soul thirsts for Elohim, the Living Power’ (Psalm 42).
As one contemplates further on these things, one will immediately recoil in fear and awe realizing that one is a tiny, lowly creature standing with flimsy wisdom before the One who has perfect knowledge.
Rambam (Maimonides), Mishneh Torah, Yesodei Hatorah 2:2

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Humankind has made itself unnatural by training itself not to be amazed, by working hard at not responding to the world in awe. That is the root affliction of an age anxious to the point of personal paralysis and moral incapacity. What human beings need most today is to recapture that radical amazement which is the most basic level of faith. They need to let themselves ask once again with full force and fervor: Why is there anything at all? Why is it so wondrous, so unexpected? Why is it we can even ask the marvel?
Eugene B. Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology in the Making
Adapted for gender neutrality