

# History of the Green Living Movement Beth Tikvah



The Talmud tells the story of a farmer who was clearing stones from his field and throwing them onto a public thoroughfare. A pious one rebuked saying, "Worthless one! Why are you clearing stones from land which is not yours and depositing them on property which is yours?" The farmer scoffed at him for this strange reversal of the facts. In the course of time, the farmer had to sell his field, and as he was walking on the public road, he fell on those same stones he had thoughtlessly deposited there. He then understood the truth of the pious one's words: the damage he had wrought in the public domain was ultimately damage to his own property and well-being. (Tosefta, Baba Kama, 10:2; cf Baba Kama 50b. Paraphrased by Jonathan Helfand, [Judaism and Environmental Ethics](#))

*Source: CCAR*

Tikkun Olam through Green Living is a component of Beth Tikvah's Social Action Program, concerned with issues relating to the environment. It recognizes the central role our tradition plays in mandating us to be good stewards of our natural resources.

Green Living was introduced to Beth Tikvah in 2008. Congregants joined together on Mitzvah Day to produce and distribute reusable cloth shopping bags with the Beth Tikvah logo. (Sally Stefano had brought the bag idea back from a convention she attended.) Some concerned congregants from the Social Action committee put together a leaflet, which was inserted into the bags, specifying some ways we can contribute to caring for our world so that it will be available for future generations.

From this initial activity developed a more permanent approach to encourage congregants to become involved in issues relating to the environment published in Tikvah Topics. In This Week, suggestions were featured that included specific actions one can take both at Beth Tikvah and at home to move toward a more sustainable life style –a life style that leaves fewer issues for future generations to deal with.

*As more emphasis is placed at Beth Tikvah on environmental concerns, the importance of the issue demanded more space than it was possible to allocate in our publications. We now have our own webpage, "Green Living" under Social Action on the Beth Tikvah website.*