

Your Jewish Connection
Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee
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Become a Happy Household

For the past year or so, I've been sorting through 37 years of accumulation at my mom's house. It wasn't all her stuff, as my two brothers and I still had some things there. I did this because my 93 year old mother moved to my middle brother's new house.



Over the course of the year, I acquired my stuff that had been left at mom's plus a whole lot more. My own house is filled with more boxes than ever (and I already had a cellar full of those!).

Because of this accumulation of stuff, I really got to thinking about what to do with it. Do I really need everything in those boxes? What can be put to good use elsewhere, even re-gifted, or re-used, re-purposed, recycled, or donated? So I am embarking on a journey to do just that, and I hope you'll join me.

In the book *Sharing Eden*, Jessica Elgot of [The Jewish Chronicle Online](#) reports that ‘Rabbi Natan Levy traces Jewish thought on the environment back to Adam entering the Garden of Eden confronted with the task of sustainability...Do not let the world remain barren, do not accept brokenness. That is the message that G-d wished to impress upon Adam, and through him to all of humanity.’

Rabbi Joel Hoffman wrote an article for the Jewish Post, [Why the Environment Is a Jewish Issue](#). He says:

According to a *Midrash* G-d said: “See my works, how fine and excellent they are! All that I created, I created for you. Reflect this, and do not corrupt or desolate my world; for if you do, will be no one to repair it after you.” (*Midrash Eccesiates Rabbah* 7:13) This is a very powerful statement. G-d is telling we are responsible for preserving His creations.



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Interestingly enough, [recycling is a Jewish tradition](#), as described by Binyomin Adilman at the Jewish Virtual Library. For example, the etrog from Sukkot is poked full of cloves and used to make a fragrant pomander for the Havdalah service at the conclusion of Shabbat. And at the [Jewish Environmental Ethics blog](#), Sheina makes a good case for why environmentalism is a part of being Jewish.

At Huffington Post Religion, Rabbi Evan Moffic lists *3 Jewish Values for Earth Day* (read the [full article](#)):



- The first is captured in the Hebrew phrase *l'dor v'dor*, the imperative that we pass on our earth "from generation to generation."
- The second critical value is *bal tashchit*. In Hebrew that means "do not destroy."

- The final critical value is *shomrei adamah*, which means "guardians of the earth."

Certainly in our modern society there is a surfeit of stuff and we all could do with less. We can make [kippot out of soda cans](#). We can buy [goods made with recycled materials](#). We can be creative and [craft with recycled items](#).

We can learn what [happens at recycling plants](#). If recycling electronics, there are [Six Questions to Ask Computer Recycling Companies and Organizations](#). To introduce youth to recycling, play the [Recycling Race game](#).

Plus you can join the Happy Households project (use [this Facebook link](#)). Here you can post about what you've done and include before and after photos if you want. You can find tidbits of information on de-cluttering, recycling, donating, etc. Plus find others who are doing the same thing.

So join me on Happy Households! We'll work together for greener and sustainable homes where we can feel freedom from our stuff and truly have those items that bring us joy and happiness.



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For the Editor in case there are issues with the links:

Why the Environment is a Jewish Issue (Jewish Post) <http://www.jewishpost.com/viewpoints/why-the-environment-is-a-jewish-issue.html>

Recycling — it's all in the Torah (The Jewish Chronicle Online) <http://www.thejc.com/news/social-action/69572/recycling-%E2%80%94-it%E2%80%99s-all-torah>

Issues in Jewish Ethics: Recycling in Jewish Tradition (Jewish Virtual Library) <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/recycling.html>

Jewish Environmental Ethics blog <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/jewish-environmental-ethics/2010/12/18/judaism-and-recycling/>

3 Jewish Values for Earth Day (Huffington Post) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-evan-moffic/3-jewish-values-for-earth_b_3131088.html

Soda Can Kippah <http://fairtradejudaica.org/product/soda-can-kippah/>

Made with Recycled Materials http://fairtradejudaica.org/product_category/recycled-materials/

Creative Jewish Mom – Recycling Crafts <http://www.creativejewishmom.com/crafts-recycling/>

Things I Learned at a Recycling Plant (Jewish in St Louis) <http://jewishinstlouis.org/things-i-learned-at-a-recycling-plant/>

Six Questions to Ask Computer Recycling Companies and Organizations <http://jewishchoices.org/?p=43>

The Recycling Race (a game at Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael Jewish National Fund) <http://www.kkl.org.il/eng/people-and-environment/youth-and-education/games-israel/recycling-race/>

Happy Households at Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HappyHouseholds>

