

# הקשר היהודי שלך

## Your Jewish Connection

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee

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### Jews and Social Justice

Where is justice embedded in Jewish values, tradition, and history? Is there a difference between social justice and repairing the world (*tikkun olam*)? What is one's responsibility to ending injustices?

The prophets tell us not to neglect the oppressed, weak, or poor of our communities. The *Torah* reminds us that we shall not oppress a stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. *Tikkun olam* is a Kabbalistic vision of a broken, holy world that requires human mending. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel believes that "In a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible." ([cited from here](#)).



Jews share a sacred duty to accept responsibility for the vulnerable people in our midst. One organization, [MAZON, A Jewish Response to Hunger](#), seeks to uphold that obligation by embodying the twin Jewish ideals of *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam*.

MAZON was founded by Leonard Fein z"l father of TBA member Rachel Davidson. We ourselves, Temple Beth Abraham, partner with MAZON to help end the injustice of hunger. To understand more about hunger, read [8 Myths About Hunger](#).

Other organizations working towards social justice are many, and can be found at these Web sites:

- [Jewish Social Justice Roundtable](#) ([see here](#) for a description and history)
- [Uri L'Tzedek](#): Orthodox Social Justice
- [Religious Action Center](#) of Reform Judaism

Young people looking for ways to get involved can check out [Avodah](#), the Jewish Service Corps, and [Tivnu](#): Building Justice. *Avodah* provides service and community building that inspires young adults to become lifelong leaders for social change whose work for justice is rooted in and nourished by Jewish values. At *Tivnu*, they build houses, build community, and build a better world, and it is the only service learning organization that braids together direct service for the fulfillment of basic human needs, Jewish learning and living, and leadership development.

Other organizations where you can learn and/or be involved:

- [Bend the Arc](#), a Jewish Partnership for Justice, is a national movement that pursues justice as a core expression of Jewish tradition
- [T'ruah](#), the rabbinic call for human rights
- [American Jewish World Service](#) works to realize human rights and end poverty in the developing world
- [On 1 Foot](#) offers Jewish texts on social justice

If you want to delve into the history of American Jewish social justice, look at the education materials at [Living the Legacy: A Jewish Social Justice Education Project](#) at the Jewish Women's Archive. It brings to life the history of American Jewish activism through the stories of women and men working in the Civil Rights and Labor movements.

When we talk about social justice, we want to get beyond interpersonal ethics to the ethics of life in common. We want to engage both friends and strangers. [Aryeh Cohen](#)'s book, *Justice in the City*, states "...a just city should be a community of obligation... toward others who are not always in view. These 'others' include workers, the poor, and the homeless."

Social justice calls to our deepest human selves. For us, it is a Jewish calling and one for Jews to answer. Just follow the advice on the logo that [Jews United for Justice](#) uses: Think Jewishly, Act Locally.

