

RABBI SHAWN ZEVIT

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**“Tikkun Hanefesh V'Olam:
Integrated Approaches - Balancing
Internal Growth and
Transformative Activism”**



Blessing for Study and the Needs of
Community:

***Baruh atah Adonay eloheynu meleh
ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu la'a'sok b'tzorchei tzibur.***

**(Blessed are you God, Creator of the
Universe, Source of Holiness in our
engaging in the needs of community.)**

1) There shall be one law both for you
of the community and also for the
stranger who lives among you; A law
for ever throughout the generations;
as you are, so shall the stranger be
before YHVH. One Torah and one
code... *Bamidbar (Numbers), 15:15-16*

2) Justice, justice shall you pursue, that
you may live and inherit the land that
the Lord your God is giving you.
Deuteronomy 16:20

3) These are the things that you shall
do: speak every one the truth to your
neighbor, execute the judgment of
peace and truth in your gates; and let
none of you devise evil in your
hearts against your neighbor, and
love no false oath, for these are the

things I hate, says God.

Zechariah 8: 16-17

4) Any person who works for needs of
community; it is as if that person is
studying Torah.

P. Talmud, Berachot 5:1

5) Rabbi Hama... said: What does the
text mean, 'You shall walk in God's
paths?' Surely this does not imply that
a person may actually walk behind
the Divine presence. Rather the
meaning is to walk after the attributes
of the Holy One. As God clothes the
naked... so do you... clothe the naked;
as the Holy One visits the sick... so do
you visit the sick; as the Holy One
comforts mourners, ... so do you
comfort mourners; as the Holy One,
buries the dead, so do you bury the
dead. *B. Talmud, Sotah 14a*

6) Belief in God, has to do... with
human nature, with the way
individual men and women act, with
their attitudes, their ideas of what is
good and what is bad, with their
ideals... If we believe that life is
worthwhile, that it is good, that, in
spite of sickness and accidents, in
spite of poverty and war, in spite of
all the sad and difficult conditions in
the world, that the world can still be
made a better place, then we believe
in God. When we believe in God, we
cannot be discouraged because we
believe that all the misery in the
world is due, not to the fact that
misery must be there, that it is a
necessary part of life, but to the fact
that we have not yet discovered how
to do away with that misery.

*Rabbi Ira Eisenstein (adapted), From the
Shabbat Vehagim, the Reconstructionist
Shabbat and Festival prayer book,
Reconstructionist Press*

7) *TO REPAIR THE WORLD SO THAT
IT REFLECTS THE KINGDOM OF
GOD (DIVINE VALUES). (Siddur)*

Tikkun Olam refers to the imperative to repair the world, so that it reflects the divine values of justice (tzedek), compassion (hesed), and peace (shalom).

Our ethic as a people is grounded in our collective memory of slavery and exodus, oppression, and liberation. The Torah repeatedly emphasizes that our experience as slaves teaches us that we have a special responsibility to the stranger and the powerless, "You shall not oppress the stranger for you know the experience of the stranger having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt."

After the Holocaust, the Biblical commandment "Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor" assumes a new and urgent meaning. As a people who suffered so much as a result of the indifference and passivity of others, we must actively oppose injustice and oppression wherever it occurs. To be neutral on issues of justice is to side with the oppressor. Our passion for justice must be applied not only to Jews but to all peoples. If we are not for ourselves who will be for us; if we are only for ourselves, what are we?

Tikkun Olam (Acts of Caring
and Repair of the World) Mishkan
Shalom, Phil, PA

8)What of Prayer and Social Justice?
by Rabbi Shawn Zevit

Is this not the beginning and end of prayer?
To love each other and the planet
Of which we are a part
To inspire and ignite within us
The very sense of communal responsibility
That our prayers become activist stances-
Connecting us to our own hearts and values,
To those in our immediate communities

And ultimately as all worship ends in
Aleynu-
It is upon us "li'takeyn olam b'malchut
Shaddai" - To repair the world for
Godliness to permeate everywhere.

Love is an action, not only a feeling-
And we pray for justice to enter our hearts
The Jewish path in prayer and justice
Is both reflexive and externally active.
Our word for prayer is "tefillah"
From the ancient Hebrew "palal"-
To judge or discern.
The prefix directs us
to meet the internal "judge"
And pour our hearts and action outwards
From the place of greater clarity
and equanimity.
Are not judges those we look to
For the dispensation
and discernment of justice?

Holy One of Blessing
Your invitation is to locate
our acts of tikkun olam
In honesty, in equity, in love for ourselves,
Loving each other and the world,
in justice.

Without prayer we may start to believe
We alone are the source and judge
Of what is a right course of action
Without taking our prayers
Out of the sanctuary into the streets
We risk seeking comfort and escape
From the cries around us.

All of the natural world
Has its own song to the universe
When we lovingly open our hearts
When we strive for justice within
And outside the walls of our communities
Then we prayer can become
A grounding source for the ideas of justice
And a grounding force for the actions of
justice

**Towards the Evolving Globally
Sustainable Religious Civilization of the
Jewish People Rabbi Shawn Zevit**

A theology which is not a plan of social action is merely a way of preaching and praying. It is a menu without the dinner. Mordecai Kaplan, Random Thoughts, p. 22

Often times this task can seem daunting. With so much suffering amidst the wonder of life itself, where is one to begin to attempt to return the balance to the world? Before *tikkun olam* became synonymous with *social action* in the 1960's, earlier Jewish mystics developed the idea of *tikkun* as re-balancing the divine energies in the world within one's own soul (*tikkun hanefesh*) and on a transpersonal and universal level (*tikkun olam*). The imbalance was not seen as a result of an absence of *hesed* (loving-kindness or fluidity), *gevurah* (strength or structure) or any of the other *sephirot* (Divine emanations, attributes or foundational energies of existence), but rather the absence of interdependent relationships between all the energies that make up the fabric of the world.

We are not inherently broken and need repair. We are inherently whole, but not always in relationship with this sense of *Echad* (Unity),

our Godly potential, with each other and with the world. Perspective or systems may be broken; their repair happens when we reaffirm our covenant with Life and take our values and beliefs from the prayer book and the study halls into every aspect of our lives.

Tohu (disorder) refers to the state of the original Sefirot (Divine Emanations), as unformed and unordered points. Tikun (restitution; reformation) refers to the state of the sefirot rearranged, meded and reformed... Thus among the Sefirot of Tohu there is no inter-relationship... no mutual inclusion- each on its own, without relating to its opposite. The Sefirot of Tikun, on the other hand, compound one another...permitting the mitigating influence of wisdom, and are, therefore, able to inter-relate. Likutei Amirim, "The Tanya" Reb Schneur Zalman of Llyady

By reclaiming this holistic approach, we can make a great contribution to the planet right now. Tikkun means, I look inside myself self, at what the work I need to do individually, to become the most I can, to understand my wholeness in the world, and to try and deal with my blind spots and my shadows. And I think that type of tikkun is a balanced, holistic look, where we do not split off physical, emotional,

spiritual, intellectual aspects of ourselves. We look and inner, intra, inter-personal, as well as the systems we are part of in the world wide web of Souls.

List of Jewish Values/Middot

1. *B'tzelem Elohim* (In the Image of God): In Genesis we learn that all people were created in the image of God. Because of this there is a spark of the Divine in every human being.
2. *Kedushah* (Holiness): Finding what is sacred and unique in the world. We are created to imitate God's holiness and act as a holy people.
3. *Kavod* (Honor): All people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Kavod between people is one of the highest goals of Judaism, and through this comes kavod for God.
4. *Mishpat* (Fair Judgment): Judgment based on a fair decision, rule of law. "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.
5. *Chochmah* (Wisdom): We are not born with wisdom but acquire it through learning. "Who is wise? One who learns from all people."
6. *Derech Eretz* (Right Behavior): Literally translated as "way of the land" in the sense of living up to our community's standards. The more we perform this, the more human we become.
7. *G'milut Chasadim* (Acts of Lovingkindness): Personal, unselfish acts for the well-being of others. "On three things does the world stand: Study of Torah, worship of God, and Gemilut Chasadim."

8. *Tzedek* (Justice): More than charity, this is an obligation to do justice. Protecting the rights of others. "Justice, justice shall you pursue."
9. *Shalom* (Peace): Creating cooperation and understanding between people. "The whole Torah exists for the sake of promoting Shalom."
10. *Pikuach Nefesh* (Saving a Life): More important than all the other mitzvot. "Saving a single life is a mitzvah equal to saving the entire world."

Alevnu (its Upon Us)

Music and Words by Shayndel Kahn

May we feel Your holy power,
 May we feel Your holy strength,
 May we feel Your holy presence,
 Surround s in this holy place.
 May we feel the earth beneath our feet,
 As we ben and bow to You,
 May our bodies rise to greet You,
 As we feel your presence forging through.

**CH: It's upon us, it's upon us,
 to feel Your holy ground,
 It's upon us, it's upon us,
 to hear Your holy sound,
 It's upon us, it's upon us,
 to feel the love inside,
 It's upon us, it's upon us,
 to face You and not hide.
 It's upon us, it's upon us,
 to think, to act, to do,
 It's upon us, it's upon us,
 to do what's right and true,
 It's upon us, it's upon us,
 to reach up to the sky,
 It's upon us, it's upon us,
 to take our wings and fly.**

Aleinu l'shabeach ladon hakol (repea

