

WHERE HEAVEN AND EARTH KISS

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Abstract

Global climate change and the looming environmental disaster represent one of the greatest ethical and existential crises of our day. The present article seeks to examine the intricacies of rabbinic tort law (*nezikin*) with an eye to contemporary questions of pollution and environmental degradation. Taking up three case studies, it seeks to outline the basic thrust of the classical rabbinic sources and their later medieval interpreters. It then attempts to demonstrate their relevance for contemporary debates over environmental policy and ethics, considering their legal and moral implications for our highly industrialized and globalized economy. The essay argues that these sources demand behavioral changes and a significant shift toward a reverence for the world that is grounded in personal and communal responsibility. The Talmudic sources—read through the lens of *aggadah*—offer a critical prescriptive vocabulary for the mandates of environmental activism from the heart of Jewish legal literature.