

Tikkun Olam: a concept in need of repair

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Rabbi Meir says, 'Look not at the vessel but rather at what is therein; there are new vessels which contain old wine, but also old vessels which may not contain even new wine' – *Pirkei Avot* 4:27

Tikkun olam is ubiquitous in the cogitations of certain circles, and, consequently, increasingly also in wider contemporary Jewish discourse.¹ Everybody knows what it means. 'Tikkun olam means social justice.'² And everybody knows what 'social justice' means. It is about environmentalism, toxic waste, renewable energy, economic justice, gay rights, intermarriage, criticism of Israel, opposition to the Iraq War, feminism, nuclear disarmament, universal healthcare, interfaith, foreign aid.³ Indeed, as the late American Reform rabbi, Arnold Jacob Wolf, lamented, 'it is no coincidence that our Jewish program looks pretty much like that of the ACLU or the Democratic Party... God seems to require of us no more and no less than a vote for Al Gore or for saving the whale.'⁴ In his censorious review of *Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call For Justice*, a collection of essays by American Jewish progressives, Hillel Halkin also observes, 'on everything Judaism has a position – and, wondrously, this position just happens to coincide with that of the American liberal Left.'⁵

Taking a political position on these typically left-wing issues is not the object of this essay; in any case, it has been argued that tikkun olam can be used to serve conservative ends as well.⁶ Rather, the object is twofold: to address, on the one hand, the problem raised by the variance with halakha that often characterises these political causes; and on the other hand, the appropriation of the term. How can today's 'tikkun olam' agenda find legitimacy in such an ancient concept? Or, put differently, can such an old vessel genuinely contain such new wine?

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In fact, the use of term to denote its contemporary meaning is a relatively recent phenomenon.⁷ It was first used in the modern era as late as the 1950s by Shlomo Bardin, founder of the non-denominational and pluralist Brandeis Camp Institute in California, and by the 1970s it was adopted by the United Synagogue Youth (the national youth arm of American Conservative Judaism), which changed the name of its social action programs from 'Building Spiritual Bridges' to 'Social Action Tikkun Olam', or 'SATO'.⁸ In the late 1970s, the left-wing New Jewish Agenda employed the slogan 'Tikkun Olam', and in the 1980s it became the inspiration for liberal activist Michael Lerner's *Beyt Tikkun Synagogue* and *Tikkun Magazine*, which 'was started as the liberal and progressives' alternative to the voices of conservatism and the neo-cons.'⁹ Lerner's Tikkun community is part of the Jewish Renewal movement, which places a heavy emphasis on tikkun olam.¹⁰ In 1988 tikkun olam was incorporated into Conservative Judaism's statement of principles.¹¹ Emil Fackenheim, the noted philosopher and Reform rabbi, also introduced tikkun olam into the post-Holocaust theology of his seminal book, *To Mend a World: foundations of post-Holocaust Jewish thought*.¹² It was only in the latter stages of this gradual adoption, though, that the search began for traditional sources for the modern presentation of tikkun olam.¹³ This essay shall examine whether these sources do, in fact, exist.

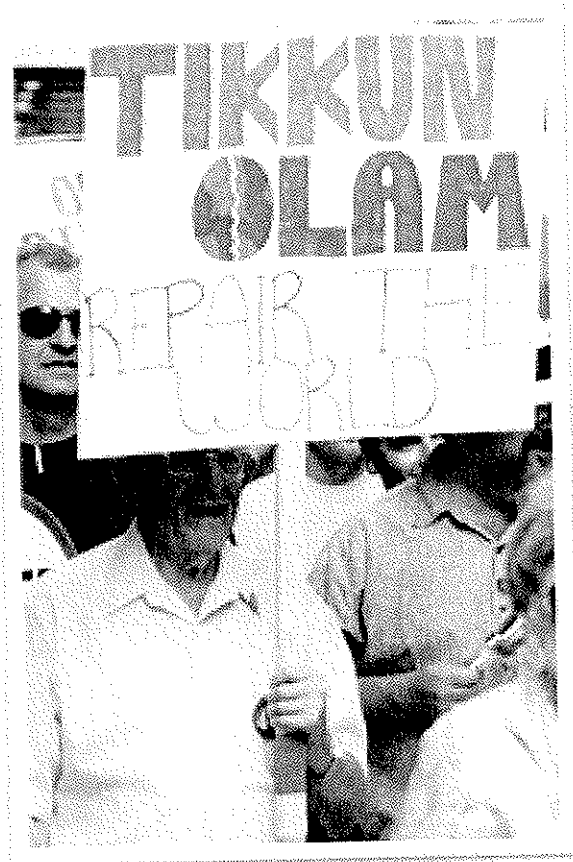
In the past couple of decades, tikkun olam has become all but hegemonic, emerging from ever more diverse quarters: Bill Clinton and Cornel West, Barack Obama, Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the Israeli consul-general in New York, and even some Orthodox Jewish groups are making appeals thereto.¹⁴ Wolf is justified, then, in describing it as a 'strange and half-understood notion [which has become] a huge umbrella under which our petty moral concerns and political panaceas can come in out of the rain.'¹⁵ Similarly, as Fine comments, contemporary liberal Jewish thinker Leonard Fein can now reasonably describe tikkun as a central conception of Judaism as a whole, one which any Jew should be able to recognise automatically.¹⁶

As regards whether we, as Orthodox Jews, should engage in tikkun olam, we must divide the term (the vessel) from its contemporary substance (the wine), and consider whether traditional sources exist to warrant the modern usage.

'Tikkun' is often understood as 'repair' or 'perfect', but can also mean 'rectify', 'improve' and 'establish' as well, all of which terms have dissimilar connotations. 'Olam', meanwhile, commonly translated as 'world', can also mean 'eternity' and 'perpetuity'. Indeed, in the cases of both terms, the various meanings are actually simultaneously implied in the Hebrew. Thus 'tikkun olam' cannot be explored in a vacuum; rather, in Foucauldian fashion, we must instead look to the evolving uses of the term in the tradition.

To that end, we must consider the thematically variegated and chronologically diverse appearances of the concept in the traditional texts. In this regard, this essay aspires to some originality in its comprehensiveness: many recent discussions of tikkun olam in the press and in the academy have attempted a thorough textual exploration but have often omitted important traditional allusions (as well as recent erroneous references). Though this essay cannot guarantee exhaustiveness, it is certainly more wide-ranging than any one of its sources: it shall examine the Biblical, liturgical, Talmudic, Midrashic, Maimonidean and Kabbalistic (particularly the Lurianic) references, amongst others, to tikkun olam. The thematic diversity of the concept will betray its amorphousness and undermine its dubious recent attachment to a political agenda.

Further, by demonstrating the multi-faceted underlying nature of tikkunolam, this essay shall question the centrality recently afforded the one understanding of the concept. In fact, it has played very particular and limited



roles in specific circumstances with little aspiration to a broader significance, barely assuming anything more than a peripheral place in the tradition. Perhaps, the Lurianic strand is the exception that proves the rule, but it illustrates the dangers of veering from the norm.

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To deal preemptively with a potential criticism: it might be noted that old vessels are often filled with new wine in our tradition, and therefore this particular instance should not occasion disproportionate distress. Indeed, Fine remarks that tikkun is useful precisely because of its malleability, and though it is easily lifted out of its original context, changed in meaning and transformed into a 'normative' Jewish value, the process of legitimating a contemporary idea by clothing it in the garb of tradition is as old as tradition itself.¹⁷

The retort is twofold: first, the clothing of novelty in old garb rarely goes unchallenged, and its legitimacy is judged

by its sustainability, that is, in retrospect. In this Darwinian sense, then, opposition now is not only natural but, indeed, warranted, and History shall be the judge. Secondly, the seemingly inorganic evolution of tikkunolam into its present metamorphosis is underscored by its divorce from genuine textual authority (indeed, we noted above that the search for sources began well after the metamorphosis) and, most crucially, halakha. Whatever the traditional ambivalence toward tikkunolam, the primacy of halakha in this area (as in all areas) has never been in doubt. (This point is particularly worth bearing in mind when we come to the exposition of Lurianic thought.) That contemporary tikkun olam activity, typically on the part of the non-Orthodox, is at variance with halakha, suggests, therefore, that, as far as the halakhic tradition is concerned, the present tikkun olam - if it is a coherent vessel at all - is an old vessel that 'does not contain even new wine'.

The sources on tikkun olam

This section will review the traditional uses of the phrase 'tikkun olam' without reference to its contemporary substance, except insofar as observing the dissonance between the traditional understandings and the present-day uses as part of our argument that the latter are novel. We shall proceed through each relevant textual genre in turn and in a fairly chronological fashion. It may be pedantic to observe that the precise phrase, 'tikkun olam', barely appears in the traditional texts. This is important to note before we embark on our overview, since it gives license for a broader scope.

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The Tanakh

One might expect an idea apparently as central as tikkun olam to appear prominently in the Bible, and yet it is entirely absent. (To reiterate, this refers to appearances of the phrase, not Biblical implorations for Jewish responsibility to the wider world.) The root t-k-n does appear, however, but only three times, all in Kohelet (*Ecclesiastes*):¹⁸ 'A twisted thing cannot be straightened' (1:15), 'Observe God's doing, for who can straighten what He has twisted?' (7:13), and '...beside being wise, Kohelet also imparted knowledge to the people: he listened, and sought out, arranged many

proverbs' (12:9).¹⁹ Of the three uses, only the second has any possibly normative implication; the first is proverbial, the third quasi-biographical. Moreover, even the second instance is largely abstract: granted, it serves a cautionary function, but it does not imply that any 'repair' or 'straightening' is presently or urgently called for, nor that some notion of tikkun has been necessitous from time immemorial.²⁰ Almost to the contrary, it speaks to the greatness of God's handiwork in a general sense, albeit warning of its vulnerability. It is evident, then, that 'tikkun' has multiple uses, and, in general, that the Biblical authority for tikkun olam is negligible.

Aleinu

The identity of the composer of Aleinu is disputed: some point to Joshua following the conquest of Jericho, others to the *Tanna*, Rav (Abba Arika), who placed it in the blessing of Malkhiyut (kingship) in the Rosh Hashanah Mussaf (it later made its way into the daily prayers too).²¹ Others attribute authorship to the Anshei Knesset HaGedola (Men of the Great Assembly): that it does not mention the destruction of the Temple and alludes to worship by prostration both suggest a provenance preceding the Temple's destruction.²² Regardless of Aleinu's origin, its reference to tikkun olam is arguably the most famous. To understand the reference, we must examine it in context; in particular, we must ask to what the tikkun here refers, and who is to do it.

Aleinu proclaims, 'I taken olam b'malkhut Shaddai', translated as, 'to perfect the world under the kingship of Shaddai,' the name of God reflecting His aspect of sufficiency.²³ This is taken to mean the universal recognition of God's sovereignty and the abolition of idolatry; the line continues: '...when all humanity will call on Your name, and the earth's wicked will all turn to You. All the world's inhabitants will realise and know that to You every knee must bow and every tongue swear loyalty...'²⁴ This universalist vision complements the particularistic motif of chosenness in the first paragraph of Aleinu, an allegedly chauvinistic passage many American Reform and Liberal communities have abandoned. Contrastingly, many have left the second paragraph unedited, and indeed sometimes even in Hebrew.²⁵ Nevertheless, Jill Jacobs, a non-Orthodox writer, has re-interpreted the prayer as calling for 'the manifestation of divinity in every corner of the world', citing the fourteenth-century Spanish liturgical commentator, David ben R. Yosef Abudirham, who comments on this line that 'when impurity is destroyed from the world, then the Divine presence will return

throughout the world.²⁶ This is uncontroversial, but Jacobs then goes on to elucidate such ‘impurities’ as ‘poverty and discrimination’, which not only have no basis in the text, but in the case of abolishing discrimination could actually hinder the cause of extirpating idolatry. This alludes to the general dangers of loose interpretation of Kabbalistic thought, more on which later.

The tikkun olam referred to in Aleinu, then, concerns the universal recognition of God’s kingship.²⁷ We can now turn to our second question: who is to do the tikkun? In Aleinu, the agent is, in fact, not the Jews or humanity, but God Himself. He is implored ‘I’taken olam b’malkhut Shaddai’.²⁸ There are at least two supporting observations behind this interpretation. First, it is the pattern of the eschatological prayers in the liturgy of the High Holydays.²⁹ Secondly, and most obviously, it features in a paragraph which opens with, ‘Therefore we hope to You’ (‘al ken nekaveh lekha’); God is the object of the prayer.³⁰ Aleinu, then, does not oblige Jews to engage in tikkun olam, let alone endorse its present-day connotations.

However, as Ballabon notes, this is not a ‘disqualifying flaw’, since Religious Zionism (as an ideology and a movement), for instance, holds that human activity can have an acceleratory impact on Redemption, and therefore just because Aleinu implores God I’taken olam does not necessarily exclude the Jewish People from contributing to that process. The dangers of utopianism aside, if Jews are also to be metakken ha-olam, are ‘poverty and discrimination’ the first ‘impurities’ that come to mind?³¹ Aleinu is a Messianic call for God I’taken olam in His kingship, eradicating idolatry and imposing recognition of His malkhut over all mankind – a far cry from contemporary tikkun olam.

The Mishna and Gemara

The Mishna refers to ‘tikkun ha’olam’ as the rationale for a number of pragmatic innovations often instituted to overcome behaviour which, while technically legal, was contrary to the spirit of the law. Jacobs explains the ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ of the Mishna as justifying ‘forbidding a practice that, while technically legal, threatens to disrupt the system as a whole.’³² While this interpretation is valid for several of the instances, it runs the risk of inferring generality from ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’, which in fact is used very sparingly in the Mishna, barely mentioned in the Gemara, and is always applied in very specific instances with no invitation to generalise.

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In the Mishna, the phrase appears exclusively in Tractate Gittin, and primarily in the fourth chapter. Gittin 4.2 famously comes to explain that, in the past, a man could send his wife a get (writ of divorce) via a messenger, but could also constitute a court and have the get annulled before the messenger managed to hand it over to the wife. Unaware of the annulment, the wife might remarry, her children designated mamzerim. Therefore Rabban Gamliel enacted (‘hitkin’) that this would no longer be possible ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’. Jacobs translates this phrase as ‘for the sake of the system as a whole,’ but other translators opt for a less overarching interpretation: ‘for the sake of the public weal’, or ‘...the public good’, or ‘...the social order’, ‘to prevent abuses’ or ‘for the better ordering of society,’ or ‘for the benefit of society.’³³ In any case, the Mishna goes on to explain that Rabban Gamliel also ‘hitkin’ that all the names by which the husband and wife are known be inscribed in the get to prevent any confusion over identity ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’.

Gittin 4.3 describes how Rabban Gamliel ‘hitkin’ that an oath be-introduced, whereby a widow declares that she has not received her marriage settlement before taking it from the orphans’ estate. Witnesses sign in confirmation, ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’. Fear of confusion and conflict lie behind this close attention to detail. Hillel, we are told, enacted the Prozbul ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’. The Prozbul (from the Greek, πρόςβουλή, ‘prosboule’, meaning ‘at the office of the counsel of law’) was of course designed to spur lending to the poor in the sixth year of the septennial shemitta cycle.³⁴

In Gittin 4.4, we learn about slaves who are kidnapped. If such a captive slave had been pledged by his master as security to another and the master redeems him as a freeman (rather than as a slave), then the slave is not liable to enslavement by the other. However, ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’, the other is obliged to write a document to the effect that the slave is free. Again, a matter of clarification.

In Gittin 4.5, we learn that the School of Hillel opined that a half-slave works for his master one day and for himself the next. The School of Shammai, however, retorted that this is unfair for the half-slave, since he cannot marry – he cannot marry a woman slave or a freewoman – and therefore cannot fulfil the purpose of the world, namely, reproduction. So, ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’, the master is compelled to free the slave and write him a bond for half his value. The School of Hillel retracts and teaches the view of the School of Shammai. The Gemara (Pesachim 88b) deals with this Mishna, but adds nothing as regards ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’.

The memorable next Mishna goes on to discuss captives, who, we are told, should not be ransomed for more than their worth ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’. Furthermore, they should also not be aided in escape ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’, though Rabban Gamliel disagrees, stating instead that it is ‘mipenei ha’shevuyim’, (‘because of the captives’), i.e. lest they be treated worse by their captors as a result. Finally, and seemingly unconnected, one should not purchase sefarim, tefillin or mezuzot from ovedei kokhavim (literally, star-worshippers, but generally understood as idolaters) for more than their worth ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’.

The Gemara (Gittin 45a), in considering this Mishna, inquires as to the meaning of ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’, but instead of providing a general interpretation – and it is at this unique elucidatory opportunity that we would expect it – the options the Gemara suggests are particular: it wonders whether ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ in this case concerns the financial burden on the community or the fear that such a course might encourage further kidnapping. Thus, the argument of this essay is in line with the Gemara, namely, that the ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ rationale of the Rabbis is designed only for very particular circumstances.

Gittin 4.7 deals with two reasons one may divorce a wife and not take her back, even if the charges turn out to be groundless. It goes on to discuss situations in which a man vows to divorce his wife, and illustrates a point with a man in Zidon who rashly vowed to divorce his wife, but the sages allowed him to take her back ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ – since people make rash vows in anger and come to regret them.

Among other things, Gittin 4.9 rules that if a Jew sells his field to a non-Jew and a Jew then purchases the field back, the owner must bring from the field bikkurim (first fruits to the Temple) ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ – to prevent Jews

from selling their fields to non-Jews to avoid the obligation of bikkurim.

Most of the references to ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ feature in chapter four, but it also gets a mention in chapter five: Gittin 5.3 forbids making certain payments from pledged (i.e. mortgaged) land ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’. Furthermore, if one finds and returns lost property, and the owner complains that it is impaired, the finder need not take an oath disavowing responsibility, ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’. This is in order to encourage honesty.

It is noteworthy that mishnayot 5.8 and 5.9 deal with regulations prescribed ‘mipenei darkhei shalom’ (‘because/for the sake of peace’), which implies that ‘mipenei darkhei shalom’ and ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ are distinct rationales, despite their sometime erroneous conflation.³⁵

Finally, Gittin 9.4 deals with bills of divorce which are invalid but which do not, however, lead to illegitimate children (should the wife have remarried and conceived). In one case, if witnesses were present when the husband handed the get to the wife but did not sign it, she can claim the marriage settlement on any mortgaged property. The witnesses sign the get nevertheless, ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’.

It is clear that the cases of ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ in the Mishna are diverse and their concerns are particular, hence it is difficult to draw out underlying principles or themes underlying the use of the term. Several of the instances seem to nurture a theme of avoiding confusion over legal status, hence the frequent attention concerning documentation. But evidently the claim that the rationale pertains to situations where the spirit of the law was under threat does not always apply. An alternative and inspiring – but hazardous – principle to draw is that the rationale is invoked to protect the most vulnerable in society, notably divorcees, widows and slaves.³⁶ This too, though, does not always apply, and certainly regardless of whether the motif pertains or not, we have no license for further regulations ‘mipenei tikkun ha’olam’ (i.e. to protect the perceived vulnerable in our societies) beyond those explicitly stipulated by the Mishna.³⁷

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Furthermore, the Mishna does not endorse some general or universal ethic: 'tikkun ha'olam' is only relevant to Jews. Halkin infers this from the fact that the rabbis' ability to enforce laws did not extend beyond the Jews, and therefore the Mishna's intentions must be particularistic.³⁸ This is not especially convincing; a more compelling reason emerges from the circumstances themselves: the Mishna is only concerned with rectifying apparent shortcomings of specifically Jewish practices – such as regarding mamzerim, shemitta and bikkurim. Therefore, 'tikkun ha'olam' is neither applicable beyond these particular scenarios nor relevant to gentiles – it is the rationale of 'mipenei darkhei shalom' which tends to designate legislation pertaining to the wider world.

The Midrash

Several midrashim – the aggadic hermeneutics of the Rabbis – cite notions of tikkun and are cited by present-day advocates of tikkunolam. Bereishit Rabba 4:6³⁹ discusses the division of the waters (the sea and the sky) on the second day of Creation: "And let it divide the waters." R. Tabyomi said: If "for it was good" is not written in connection with that day, even though that division was made for the greater stability and orderliness of the world [tikkuno shel olam], then how much more so should this apply to a division which leads to its confusion! Jacobs highlights the use in this passage of the 'more literal understanding of "tikkunolam" as the physical repair or stabilisation of the world,⁴⁰ which is a dubious reading; the midrash is making an ethical point, not a technical one: if a schism with a positive purpose is not declared 'good', how much more so a schism with a negative purpose? As for the division of the waters qualifying as 'tikkun olam', this constitutes a Divine – not a human – activity. Its purpose – the sustainability of the world – is certainly close to some of the present-day political connotations of tikkun olam, but this midrash is not making halakhic prescriptions, and therefore there is little we can – or should – take away from it beyond the ethical comment.

Bereishit Rabba 11:6 has been cited as a reference for tikkun olam, but it is not at all clear why.⁴¹ The website of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), the self-described 'leading Jewish environmental organisation in the United States', translates a line of this midrash as follows: 'whatever was created in the first six days [of creation] requires further repair.' Their translation of the Hebrew word, 'asiya', as 'repair', however, begs reassessment.⁴² Not only is 'asiya' (literally, 'to make') rarely understood in this way, but this

translation is not loyal to the meaning of this midrash as a whole. The midrash describes a philosopher asking why Adam was not born circumcised, and R. Hoshaya's response is that whatever was created in the first six days needs further work or 'preparation', and the midrash brings examples, including the sweetening of mustard.⁴³ The notion that mustard requires 'repair' is surely rather far-fetched; rather, it needs further work. The COEJL's interpretation is therefore dubious.

Bereishit Rabba 13:13 is an abstruse midrash which considers a theme taken up also by the kabbalists.⁴⁴ Essentially, it explains that 'I [the Lord] have created it [the rain] for the benefit and stability of the world [l'tikkuno shel olam v'yishuvo']'.⁴⁵ It goes on to make mystical references to the masculine upper waters being received by the feminine lower waters, which is what it takes Yeshayahu 45:8 ('Let the sky pour down righteousness; let the earth open') to mean: it is 'like a female who receives the male', and the righteousness (tsedaka) is the rain, and it is created for the benefit and stability of the world.⁴⁶

To the extent that we can infer anything relevant for our purposes from this midrash, it is that, again, a Divine action is the source of the 'tikkun', and, once again, the 'tikkun' is more a source of sustainability than repair. More importantly, though, this midrash is particularly recondite, and therefore we must be wary of inferring anything normative from it. Jacobs nevertheless reads tikkun olam in this midrash and in the first midrash we discussed as referring to the physical preservation of the earth. Though such a construal is arguably valid, again, it should be emphasised that, first, these are exclusively Divine activities (man was not even created yet), and, secondly, this is hardly a major theme running through the midrash literature in general – as the paucity of references in this genre testifies.

Next, we return to the second of our quotations from Kohelet (7:13), which Kohelet Rabba takes up:⁴⁷ 'At the time the Holy One Blessed be He created Adam He guided him through all the plants of the Garden of Eden and said to him, see My works, how pleasant and praiseworthy they are? And all that I created, I created it for you. Beware that you not spoil and destroy My world, for if you do, there is nobody to straighten/repair [l'taken] after you....'⁴⁸ Undoubtedly, the moral of this midrash is an important reminder of the need to safeguard the Garden, and its message is not dissimilar to the general ethos of the environmental responsibility that modern-day tikkun olam espouses. That said, there is no explicit guidance on how to do the safeguarding, nor is it

necessarily obvious that certain benefits of the world should be foregone for the sake of preservation.⁴⁹

Moreover, the midrash speaks only of the potential: it is simply a warning, and it is impossible to ascertain from the passage the urgency with which man must act – if indeed action is even necessary. So, while this may be the strongest support yet for one aspect of the contemporary tikkun olam agenda, it remains a lone source and it does not tell us a great deal.

The Midrash Tanchuma on Parashat Tazria (u'vayom hashemini) does not explicitly mention tikkun olam, but this midrash is taken up later by the Or Hachaim, which does mention 'tikkun'.⁵⁰ The midrash again explores the question of why Adam was not born circumcised, but this time Turnus Rufus 'the wicked' is asking Rabbi Akiva, who responds that the mitzvot were given to the people of Israel in order to refine (litsrof) them. The Or Hachaim writes how many of God's works require further 'tikkun' or improvement, and that since man is born uncircumcised, we can infer that it is His will that we engage in such tikkun, otherwise His creations would be created complete and man would simply be born circumcised.⁵¹ This reference to tikkun is also unrelated to modern-day tikkun olam.

The final relevant midrash comes from the Midrash Hagadol, a late collection which also only became popularised relatively recently, hence its influence has been limited. The particular midrash of interest comments on Shemot 21:1, the opening of Parashat Mishpatim. Our passage begins with a reference to Mishlei 27:23: 'Know well the face of your flock; set your heart to the herd.' R. Yirniya says in the name of R. Shmuel bar Yitzhak that this is a universal ethic, suggesting that the verse is speaking to kings, men, women and children. The message to kings is relevant for our purposes: God says to the king that his authority is not due to his anointment, but rather to the King of kings. And the passage goes on to explain how this is so: because there was no king and, consequently, no laws during the generation of the flood, that generation became utterly corrupt. They rebelled and came to hamas and gezel (theft), to sexual immorality, to murder, to roaming naked, to bestiality, and, as a result, they brought upon themselves their punishment, all because there was no fear of a king or prohibitions, hence God appointed a king in the world. The generation of the Tower of Babel, on the other hand, did not behave like animals or harm one another, as their predecessors had done. And so God said to the king that He has put him here 'I'taken olami (to be metakken My world), not I'hara olami (not to damage My

world), commanding him to ensure that nobody takes more than their due from another, most likely an allusion to the hamas and gezel which engulfed the world.⁵² And 'know the face of your flock' by managing them with compassion, and 'set your heart to the herd' by ensuring that your servants are not harming their fellows.

This midrash is not typically cited by those advocating tikkun olam today, even though it calls for human agency and has a universalist aspiration.⁵³ That said, the message is specifically directed towards kings, rather than ordinary individuals, let alone Jews. Moreover, the likeliest meaning of the tikkun here is ethical, centering on the behaviour between man and his fellow: it seems to refer to the need to be metakken the world in the wake of the generation of the flood, i.e. to prevent the recurrence of such behaviour, by establishing fear of kingship and laws which prevent hamas and gezel. This understanding of tikkun does not concur with contemporary uses of the term.

Returning to the COEJL, we can illustrate the dangers of allowing a political agenda to inform readings of the tradition.⁵⁴ The COEJL lists ten (largely valid) 'Jewish teachings', the last of which – 'tikkun olam' – mentions the midrash we cited from Kohelet Rabba, but makes no inference. Instead, the teaching goes on to cite Aleinu, and notes that tikkun olam, 'the perfecting or repairing of the world, has become a major theme in modern Jewish social justice theology... it is an important concept in light of the task ahead in environmentalism. In our ignorance and our greed, we have damaged the world and silenced many of the voices and the choir of Creation. Now we must fix it. There is no one else to repair it but us.' Relevant for us is not the politics of these claims, but the juxtaposition of Jewish sources which *seem* to relate to the matter at hand as an acceptable substitute for rigorous interpretation; the agenda is already there, and the gloss of the Jewish tradition adds authenticity, even at the expense of validity. To quote Halkin: 'Judaism has value to such Jews to the extent that it is useful, and it is useful to the extent that it can be made to conform to whatever beliefs and opinions they would have even if Judaism had never existed.'⁵⁵

Maimonides

A passing reference to tikkun olam appears in Rambam's Hilkhhot Melakhim (Laws of Kings) 11:4 which reads, 'and he [the messianic king] will prepare the whole world to serve the Lord [veyitakken et ha'olam kulo la'avod et Hashem].'⁵⁶ This reference appears to support the notion that tikkun olam is the product of human activity, albeit in this case of one particular individual. In fact, though,

this rendering of the line is distorted: in the original, uncensored version, the reference follows a long examination of the functions of Christianity and Islam in the Divine plan of history, and it is they who are here to prepare the world. The role of the messianic king goes unmentioned. So the result may be the outcome of human activity, but the process is clearly orchestrated by God.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the purpose is not social justice or environmentalism, but to bring the world to monotheism. This text is not, then, a source for present-day 'tikkun olam'.

The purpose is not social justice or environmentalism, but to bring the world to monotheism.

The Kabbalistic tradition

The *Zohar* picks up on the subject of the Midrash about rain which we cited earlier.⁵⁸ The passage concerns the desire of the feminine for the masculine and is not amenable to practical application for the simple reason that the tikkun here is not a human activity – indeed these events precede the creation of man. In short, there are no concrete normative indications in this passage.

Previously, it was God doing the tikkun, now the Jewish people become seen as God's partners in repairing the world.

It is, however, Lurianic thought that is credited with popularising tikkun olam. The critical innovation with which R. Isaac Luria (the 'Ari') is credited – for instance by Howard Schwarz – is that, whereas previously, it was God doing the tikkun, now the Jewish people become seen as God's partners in repairing the world.⁵⁹ Setting aside the debate over his originality, the Ari framed the Creation as *tsimtsum*, a withdrawal or contraction of God into Himself, and the consequent creation of a space into which He could be revealed, which is the object of Creation.⁶⁰ Since evil is the product of boundaries, the Creation necessarily brought evil into existence, and the famous 'shevirat hakeilim' (the 'shattering of the vessels') was an inevitable and necessary 'accident', but it nonetheless caused the inner deficiency inherent in everything that exists, since most of the 'sparks of light'

escaped from the vessels and either diffused back to their source or flowed downwards. 'The restoration of the ideal order, which forms the original aim of creation, is also the secret purpose of existence.'⁶¹ That process is referred to as 'tikkun'. Certain parts of this process are allotted to the Jew: it is he who perfects the Maker, and he does so through fulfilment of the mitzvot and through prayer, which, if so intended (i.e. performed with 'kavana'), unify the name of God. The appearance of the Messiah is the consummation of the process, and 'the redemption of Israel concludes the redemption of all things'.⁶²

Theosophical thought always tempts misinterpretation or, worse, misappropriation. To return to Howard Schwartz, he suggests that 'the idea of God creating humans to remedy a Divine error suggests a more universal meaning: a repaired world can be realised only if *the whole of humanity* engages in collecting the sparks' (emphasis added), a universalist distortion of an originally particularistic idea.⁶³ Just because the Ari 'now attributed a beneficial spiritual effect' to the rituals and prayers should not be understood as implying that those practices have undergone any change (except insofar as our kavana can now be more appropriately focused on the theurgic consequences of our actions in light of the Ari's revelations). Indeed, Adlerstein has biting noted that when Adam and Eve were evicted from Eden, there were not yet any wars or famine or social oppression, no holes in the ozone layer or threats to blue whales or excessive greenhouse gas emissions, and yet 'no moment in history better defined the need for tikkun olam than that one.'⁶⁴ Notably, Jacobs does stress the connection between tikkun and halakha in Lurianic thought, and understands that the 'emphasis on realising Divine perfection, rather than on improving the condition of humanity, complicates the application of the mystical concept of tikkun to contemporary social justice work.'⁶⁵ Moreover, there is even a view that Lurianic thought sees the Jewish People as mending the world, but specifically not the nations: the Jewish People is tasked not with bringing the nations to holiness but rather with sapping any holiness and vitality from them.⁶⁶ Caution in interpretation and application of kabbalistic ideas is, therefore, critical, especially as concerns Lurianic thought; the modern-day tikkunolam agenda is not the first time the notion of sparks has been misappropriated – the Sabbatean episode serves as a famous and regrettable instance.⁶⁷

R. Moshe Haim Luzatto also drew on the notion of tikkun in his *Derekh Hashem*. He explains that God made 'the transcendental forces' amenable to 'tikkun' (rectification) and 'kilkul' (spiritual damage), but this tikkun and

elevation of all creation is totally dependent on the Jews: only they can reveal His light, which is the cause of goodness, or maintain His concealment, which is the cause of evil.⁶⁸ Reminiscent of Aleinu, he writes how 'the ultimate rectification [tikkun] of all creation depends on the revelation of God's unity. He was, is, and will be One, Alone and Unique, even though at the present this is not as universally recognised as it should be. In the ultimate future, however, this will be revealed to all creation, as it has been foretold (Zechariah 14:15), "On that day, God will be One, and His Name shall be One".⁶⁹ – which is, of course, the closing line of Aleinu.

Chapter four goes on to connect these ideas with the role of the Shema as a confession 'that God is the ultimate King and Ruler of all creation', which is further reminiscent of the context of Aleinu in the Malkhiyut blessing of the Rosh Hashanah Mussaf. One can rectify (litaken) man's state in general by speaking of them (the words of the Shema) while at home and on one's way, as the Shema commands, and one can rectify one's house by putting mezuzot on its doorposts, as the Shema also commands.⁷⁰ Tikkun, here, clearly goes well beyond present-day connotations. Indeed, the 248 'concepts' of man's essence parallel the 248 'parts of his body', and they mirror the 248 parts of 'all creation' and the 248 positive commandments, hence recitation of the 248 words of the three paragraphs of the Shema perfects 'every element of man's being... with the Light of God's unity,' and also all the concepts of creation.⁷¹ All of this correlates with the Lurianic idea that tikkun is achieved through prayer and the practice of the 613 mitzvot. There is no mention of a role for gentiles in this process, nor any obligation to the wider world beyond that of the mitzvot, and certainly none contrary to the halakha. Indeed, the Exodus must be recalled because that event was the 'primary' and 'permanent' rectification of Israel, as the evil of Adam's sin still blackened man until Israel became a nation through the Exodus and was forever elevated from its degraded state.⁷²

Finally, mention of a couple of recent appearances of tikkun olam should further dispel the notion that the modern-day understanding is rooted in the tradition. First, R. Tsevi Hirsch Chajes writes in his *Torat Ha'Nevi'im* that a king has the right to kill the innocent children of a rebel, because of tikkun olam, and the Hatam Sofer agrees.⁷³ (This may be connected to the midrash from *Midrash Hagadol* cited earlier.) Secondly, one of the works of the hasidic Rabbi of Munkacz, R. Haim Elazar Shapira, published in 1936, is titled 'Sefer Tikkun Olam'. However, this work also has no relevance

to contemporary understandings of tikkun olam; rather, it primarily chronicles the correspondence between him and the Gerer Rebbe over the increasingly pervasive ideology of Zionism, which the Munkacz Rav vociferously opposed.⁷⁴

Concluding remarks

We can see from this survey how little the traditional sources support modern ideas about tikkun olam: there is no consensus on the substance of tikkun, no role in it for humanity at large, little evidence that the gentile world is even the target of such tikkun, no agreement on whether tikkun olam is practically relevant even to the Jewish People, and certainly no endorsement of any anti-halakhic activity – on the contrary, the references seem to concur only on the primacy of halakha in all our endeavours. Moreover, the relative paucity of the sources and the variety of uses indicate that tikkun olam is not, in fact, a central concept in the Jewish tradition.

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Tikkun olam is today in vogue, and some of the activities pursued in its name (where they concur with the halakha), as well as the motivating sentiment, may be admirable. However, that does not mean that these activities fulfil a fundamental Jewish imperative embedded in the tradition. As it happens, though, a more honest and exacting examination of the traditional texts would in fact reveal genuine sources for some of these activities, without the need to misappropriate a term and distort a concept.⁷⁵

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¹ Thanks to Ben Elton for his insightful comments on an earlier draft.

² J. Karanek, 'What does Tikkun Olam actually mean?' in (eds) O. N. Rose, J. E. Green Kaiser, M. Klein, *Righteous Indignation: a Jewish call for Justice* (Woodstock, VT: 2008), 22.

³ Ibid., Nuclear disarmament and feminism were part of the New Jewish Agenda. Universal healthcare was officially endorsed by the Union for Reform Judaism. For an example of the association of tikkun olam with interfaith, see

<http://cruciality.wordpress.com/2011/01/02/to-mend-the-world-tikkun-olam-a-confluence-of-theology-and-the-arts/> (accessed 6 March 2011); on foreign aid, see

<http://www.tikkunnews.org/> (accessed 06.03.11)

⁴ A. J. Wolf, 'Repairing Tikkun Olam – Current Theological Writing', *Judaism*, Fall 2001.

⁵ H. Halkin, 'How Not to Repair the World', *Commentary*, July/August 2008. Halkin's conception of tikkun olam as a tension between pragmatic and utopian agendas is interesting, but rather simplified.

⁶ M. Spiro, 'Being a Politically Conservative Reconstructionist', *Reconstructionism Today*, Spring-Summer 2004, Vol. 11, No. 3, at

<http://jrf.org/showrt&rid=533> (accessed 27.01.11).

⁷ Unless otherwise referenced, the following is based on L. Fine, Tikkun Olam in Contemporary Jewish Thought, at <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices> (accessed 20 January 2011), reprinted from 'Tikkun: A Lurianic Motif in Contemporary Jewish Thought', in (eds) J. Neusner et al., *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Intellect in Quest of Understanding: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, Vol. 4, (Atlanta 1989).

⁸ J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007.

⁹ *Tikkun Magazine: Core Vision*, at <http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/core> (accessed 19 January 2011).

¹⁰ See 'Reader's Guide to Jewish Renewal and Tikkun Olam', by Rabbi A. Waskow, 4 January 2003, at <http://www.shalomctr.org/node/1049> (accessed 27 January 2011).

¹¹ S. Breger, 'How Tikkun Olam Got its Groove', *Moment*, May/June 2010, at

<http://ftp.momentmag.com/Exclusive/2010/06/Jewish%20Word.html> (accessed 8 January 2011).

¹² E. L. Fackenheim, *To Mend a World: foundations of post-Holocaust Jewish thought*, (New York 1982). See especially Part IV. Fackenheim saw in tikkun olam a concept which conveys both the bewildering rupture of the Holocaust and also the hope and possibility of reconstruction. Thanks to Dan Rickman for drawing attention to this usage.

¹³ See 'Social Action: Tikkun Olam: The Backstory, an RJ conversation with Howard Schwartz', *Reform Judaism Online*, Winter 2009. J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007. Also A. Green, *These Are The Words: a vocabulary of Jewish spiritual life* (Woodstock 1999), 175 ff., cited in Wolf, 2001. J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007 is a rare, honest consideration of the sources on tikkun olam from an advocate.

¹⁴ On Bill Clinton and Cornel West, see J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007. On Barack Obama, see 'Barack Obama: Jewish Faith and Tikkun Olam', at

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/blog/2008/06/barack-obama-jewish-faith-and.html> (accessed 1 February 2011).

On Chief Rabbi Sacks, see S. Breger, 'How Tikkun Olam Got its Groove', *Moment*, May/June 2010 and Rabbi J. Sacks, 'Tikkun Olam: Orthodoxy's Responsibility to perfect God's World', speech delivered at the Orthodox Union West Coast Convention December 1997 – Kislev 5758, available at

<http://www.ou.org/public/Publib/tikkun.htm> (accessed 8 January 2011).

On the Israeli Consul-General, see S. Breger, 'How Tikkun Olam Got its Groove', *Moment*, May/June 2010. On Orthodox Jews, see T. Snyder, 'Social Justice – An Orthodox Cause?', *The Jewish Week*, 18 June 2008, at

http://www.thejewishweek.com/special_sections/new_activism/social_justice_%E2%80%94_orthodox_cause (accessed 8 January 2011).

¹⁵ A. J. Wolf, 'Repairing Tikkun Olam – Current Theological Writing', *Judaism*, Fall 2001. See also Z. Rivkin 'Tikkun Olam: The Rest of the Story', *C:\search\keyword.asp?kid=13680* by (audio lecture), at http://www.chabad.org/multimedia/media_cdo/aid/708521/jewish/Tikkun-Olam-The-Rest-of-the-Story.htm (accessed 27 January 2011).

¹⁶ L. Fine, Tikkun Olam in Contemporary Jewish Thought, at <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices> (accessed 20 January 2011), reprinted from 'Tikkun: A Lurianic Motif in Contemporary Jewish Thought', in

(eds) J. Neusner et al., *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Intellect in Quest of Understanding: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, Vol. 4, (Atlanta 1989).

¹⁷ Ibid.,

¹⁸ <http://www.answers.com/topic/tikkun-olam> (accessed 8 January 2011).

¹⁹ 1:15: 'me'uvat lo yukhal *litkon*'; 7:13: 'ki mi yukhal *l'taken*'; 12:9: 'v'izen v'hiker *tiken meshalim harbe*'

²⁰ This shall be further explored when we examine the Midrashic commentary on this verse.

²¹ Maimonides does not mention it as part of the order of daily prayers, but the Mahzor Vitridoes, suggesting that Sefaradim followed Ashkenazim in incorporating it into Shaharit, and subsequently into the other two daily prayers as well. See

<http://www.jewishmag.com/135mag/aleinu/aleinu.htm> (accessed 20 January 2011).

²² http://www.aleinu.org/intro_history.html, accessed 20 January 2011).

²³ See Rashi on Bereshit 17:1.

²⁴ Translation is from the Sacks Siddur. See also R.-E bat-Avraham, 2009 at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/21571291/Tikkun-Olam> (accessed 10 January 2011), and S. Breger, 'How Tikkun Olam Got its Groove', *Moment*, May/June 2010..

²⁵ J.D. Bleich, 'Tikkun Olam: Jewish Obligations to Non-Jewish Society', in (eds) D. Shatz, C. I. Waxman, and N. J. Diament,, *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law* (Northvale, NJ 1997), 98-99. See also J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007.

²⁶ R. David ben R. Yosef Abudraham, *Seder Tefillot Rosh Hashanah*, *Dibbur HaMathil 'Alken*, cited in J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007.

²⁷ We will consider this further on discussing tikkun olam in the Kabbalistic tradition.

²⁸ S. Breger, 'How Tikkun Olam Got its Groove', *Moment*, May/June 2010. This assessment shall be reconsidered in the discussion of the kabbalistic tradition.

²⁹ G. Bildstein, 'Tikkun Olam', in (eds) D. Shatz, C. I. Waxman, and N. J. Diament,, *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law* (Northvale, NJ 1997), 26 and notes ad loc.

³⁰ J. H. Ballabon, 'A View of Tikkun Olam from Capitol Hill', in (eds) D. Shatz, C. I. Waxman, and N. J. Diament,, *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law* (Northvale, NJ 1997), 224-225.

³¹ For a critique of modern-day tikkun olam as dangerously utopian, see H. Halkin, 'How Not to Repair the World', *Commentary*, July/August 2008.

³² J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007. For a similar sentiment, see J. Karanek, 'What does Tikkun Olam actually mean?' in (eds) O. N. Rose, J. E. Green Kaiser, M. Klein, *Righteous Indignation: a Jewish call for Justice* (Woodstock, VT: 2008),.

³³ J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007. The other translations are taken from Philip Blackman [1951], (New York 2000); M. Simon, *The Soncino Talmud*, (Hindhead 1935-48) and the Artscroll Schottenstein Edition of the Talmud (New York 1990-2004).

³⁴ H. Halkin, 'How Not to Repair the World', *Commentary*, July/August 2008. See Mishnah Shevi'it 10:3ff.

³⁵ For an example of such conflation, see <http://www.suite101.com/content/tikkun-olam-terrorism-and-the-reality-of-life-in-israel-a318398> (accessed 27.1.11).

³⁶ This interpretation is suggested by Jacobs, 2007.

³⁷ See J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007, for a call to just that.

³⁸ H. Halkin, 'How Not to Repair the World', *Commentary*, July/August 2008

³⁹ J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007, cites this Midrash as 4:7.

⁴⁰ Ibid. It is not clear why she attributed this Midrash to R. Hanina rather than R. Tabyomi.

⁴¹ The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), at <http://www.coejl.org/programbank/displayprog.php?id=140> (accessed 20 January 2011). See, however, note 50 below.

⁴² <http://www.coejl.org/programbank/displayprog.php?id=140> (accessed 20 January 2011).

⁴³ *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* trans. M. Simon, Volume 1, (Hindhead 1961)

⁴⁴ J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007, cites this Midrash as 13:16.

⁴⁵ *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* trans. M. Simon, Volume 1, (Hindhead 1961)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ This Midrash is cited by <http://www.coejl.org/programbank/displayprog.php?id=140> (accessed 20 January 2011).

⁴⁸ Writer's translation.

⁴⁹ H. Halkin, 'How Not to Repair the World', *Commentary*, July/August 2008

⁵⁰ Or HaHaim on Tazria 12:3. Thanks to Alistair Halpern for drawing my attention to this. Arguably, the COEJL should have cited this version of the question on Adam's

circumcision, and particularly the gloss of the Or HaHaim. Incidentally, some have argued that another interlocution (Bava Batra 10a) of R. Akiva and Turnus Rufus is a better source for Jewish responsibility to the wider world, but it too is not explicitly connected to tikkun olam in the text. See A. Dorfman, 'Beyond Good Intentions: a values proposition for Jewish-service learning', *Zeek*, at

<http://zeek.forward.com/articles/117067/> (accessed 8 March 2011).

⁵¹ In a similar vein, Sefer HaHinuch (Mitsva 2) explains how man is born uncircumcised to show that just as it is left to man to perfect his physical self through circumcision, so man learns from this that he can also perfect his spiritual self.

⁵² See also Rashi on Bereshit 6:11.

⁵³ G. Bildstein, 'Tikkun Olam', in (eds) D. Shatz, C. I. Waxman, and N. J. Diament,., *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law* (Northvale, NJ 1997), 26 and notes ad loc

⁵⁴ http://www.coejl.org/learn/je_tenje.php (accessed 20 January 2011).

⁵⁵ H. Halkin, 'How Not to Repair the World', *Commentary*, July/August 2008

⁵⁶ G. Bildstein, 'Tikkun Olam', in (eds) D. Shatz, C. I. Waxman, and N. J. Diament,., *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law* (Northvale, NJ 1997), 26 and notes ad loc.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Zohar 1:35a.

⁵⁹ 'Social Action: Tikkun Olam: The Backstory, an RJ conversation with Howard Schwartz', *Reform Judaism Online*, Winter 2009. J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007. See also <http://learningtogive.org/papers/paper169.html> (accessed 6 March 2011)

⁶⁰ See G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, [1941] revised edition, (New York 1996), 258ff., and 260 ff. The subsequent discussion is based on 'The Seventh Lecture', 244-86.

⁶¹ Ibid., 268.

⁶² Ibid., 274.

⁶³ These references are taken from 'Social Action: Tikkun Olam: The Backstory, an RJ conversation with Howard Schwartz', *Reform Judaism Online*, Winter 2009.

⁶⁴ Y. Adlerstein, 'The Hijacking of Tikkun Olam', *Cross-Currents Blog*, 4 May 2007, at <http://www.cross-currents.com/archives/2007/05/04/the-hijacking-of-tikkun-olam/> (accessed 8 January 2011); Scholem, 1996, 275; cf. Rabbi M. Luzzatto *Derekh Hashem* 1:3:8. All

translations are from R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, *Derech Hashem (The Way of God)*, trans. Aryeh Kaplan, (New York 1997), sixth edition

⁶⁵ J. Jacobs, 'The History of "Tikkun Olam"', *Zeek*, June 2007

⁶⁶ G. Bildstein, 'Tikkun Olam', in (eds) D. Shatz, C. I. Waxman, and N. J. Diament,., *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law* (Northvale, NJ 1997), 48ff.

⁶⁷ See G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, [1941] revised edition, (New York 1996), 'The Eighth Lecture', 287-324.

⁶⁸ Rabbi M. Luzzatto *Derekh Hashem* 1:5:7 and 2:4:9. Tikkun is also much more difficult since Adam's sin. See 1:3:8..

⁶⁹ Rabbi M. Luzzatto *Derekh Hashem* 4:4:1.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 4:4:1-8.

⁷¹ Ibid., 4:4:10.

⁷² Ibid., 4:4:9.

⁷³ Rabbi Ts. H. Chajes, *Torat Ha'Nevi'im* chapter 7, Rabbi M. Sofer, *She'elot u'Teshuvot Hatam Sofer, Orah Hayyim* no.108. Thanks to R. Anthony Knopf for drawing my attention to this.

⁷⁴ For more on the Munkaczer Rav, see, for instance, A. L. Nadler, 'The War on Modernity of R. Hayyim Elazar Shapira of Munkacz', *Modern Judaism* 14 (Baltimore 1994), 233-264.

⁷⁵ A good place to start is the Orthodox Forum volume on tikkun olam, (eds) D. Shatz, Ch. I. Waxman, and N. J. Diament, *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law* (Northvale, NJ 1997), esp. the essays by Gerald Bildstein, J. David Bleich and Jeffrey Ballabon. The other contributions explore the Jewish responsibility to the wider world in the context of various particular ethical questions, such as healthcare and the market.