



Measuring Our Community's Impact

Maimonides "The Preservation of Youth", Chapter 4

The quality of urban air compared to the air in the deserts and the forests is like thick and turbulent water compared to pure and light water. And this is because in the cities with their tall buildings and narrow roads, the pollution that comes from their residents and their waste... makes their entire air malodorous, turbulent, reeking, and thick, and the winds become accordingly so... And since there is no way out, because we grew up in the cities and became used to them, we can at least choose a city with an open horizon... Let the house be tall and the court be wide enough to permit the northern wind, and the sun to come through, because the sun thins out the pollution of the air, and makes it light and pure.

Maimonides is talking about the effects of urban development in 12th century Egypt, and the effects of their styles of building. Rates of urban development have increased greatly since then, and our buildings have become larger and denser.

- How can this teaching be applied to our lives?
- What can the Jewish Community do to mitigate the effects of urban or suburban living?

Pirkei Avot 2:20-21.

Lo alecha ham'lacha ligmor, v'lo ata ben chorim l'hibatil mimena.

It's not up to you to finish the task, but neither are you free to walk away from it.

1. Perform a Synagogue Environmental Audit:

- In small groups, please answer the questions outlined in the audit sheet(s) attached.
- Your results will be used to help the synagogue measure its current environmental impact ("footprint") and to identify effective ways your community can make change!

2. Upon completion of the audit:

Discuss your findings as a group. Share the improvement ideas participants generated for each category (you can post ideas on a white board for the whole group to see, or just discuss and brainstorm out loud). Continue below...

3. List 3 environmental changes that you think are realistic for your synagogue.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

4. Create a Proposal:

Based on the results of your audit and discussion, please write a short proposal for something that your class, committee, the synagogue staff, or the community can undertake to help 'green' your synagogue. Use facts from your audit as well as a Jewish teaching from the resources provided.

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Synagogue Energy Audit

Waste Management

Go to 4 rooms of varying function and answer the following questions:

| Question | Room 1 | Room 2 | Room 3 | Room 4 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| How many garbage cans does the room have? | | | | |
| How many recycling bins does the room have? | | | | |
| How full are the recycling bins? (give as %) | | | | |
| How full are the garbage cans? (give as %) | | | | |
| How much of the garbage could be recycled? (give %) | | | | |
| What types of things do you see in the garbage? | | | | |

List 4 ways in which the amount of garbage could be reduced. Be specific; refer to actual items you found.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Electricity

Go to 4 rooms of varying function and answer the following questions:

| | Room 1 | Room 2 | Room 3 | Room 4 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| If the room is not in use, are the lights on? | | | | |
| What types of light bulbs are used in the room? Incandescent, florescent, compact florescent | | | | |
| Turn on lights. Is the room too bright, too dark or properly illuminated? | | | | |

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Check the thermostat on the synagogue. What temperature is the thermostat set to? _____

Is the temperature too hot, too cold or properly heated? _____

Does the synagogue heating system allow for separate levels in each room, so the heat turns off when a room is not in use? _____

List 4 other places in the synagogue where electricity is used

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Please list 2 ways electricity can be reduced in the synagogue

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

Water:

Check each bathroom

Are any sinks dripping water? How many?

| | _____ am | _____ pm | _____ am/pm |
|--------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| <i>Men's # 1</i> | | | |
| <i>Men's # 2</i> | | | |
| <i>Men's # 3</i> | | | |
| <i>Women's # 1</i> | | | |
| <i>Women's # 2</i> | | | |
| <i>Women's # 3</i> | | | |

Are there water saving devices in the bathrooms? Such as low flow sinks, water displacers in toilet tanks, etc. _____, if yes please specify _____

List 1 way the synagogue can save water

- 1) _____

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Heating – Doors, Windows and Building:

Go to the main synagogue entrance. Are there double doors to prevent cold from getting in/out? _____

On Shabbat are these doors left open or closed? _____

Put your hands to a couple of windows. Are they letting in heat or cold? _____

Are they single, double or triple paned? _____

How high are the ceilings? _____ How does this affect the heating efficiency? (Remember: hot air rises, cold air sinks.)

List 1 way the synagogue can save energy on heating

1) _____

Outdoor and Surroundings:

A) How many trees are on the synagogue property?

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1-5 _____ | 6 – 10 _____ | 11 – 19 _____ | |
| 20 – 29 _____ | 30 – 49 _____ | 50 – 99 _____ | 100 + _____ |

Is part of the land left as a natural ecosystem? _____ Is there a garden? _____

Are plants are trees that have been planted local to this part of the world? _____

What other features does the synagogue have to protect local species? (i.e. Birdfeeders, ponds, etc.)

_____, _____, _____, _____

List 2 ways the synagogue can help protect or restore natural ecosystem and wild species.

1) _____

2) _____

B) Visit the synagogue parking lot.

% of the cars are SUVs? _____ % of t the cars are Hybrids? _____

Are there bike racks? _____ Where is the closest public transit stop? _____

List 1 way the synagogue can work to reduce vehicle emissions leading to pollution and global climate change.

1) _____

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