

# REPORT ON FAITH AND ECOLOGY TEACHING IN HOLY LAND SEMINARIES

The Interfaith Center for  
Sustainable Development



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# **Report on Faith and Ecology Instruction in Holy Land Seminaries**

By Ari Ben-Arie and Rabbi Yonatan Neril

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# Report on Faith and Ecology Teaching in North American Seminaries

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## Introduction

Environmental challenges, in particular climate change, are already impacting the Holy Land and the Middle East in dramatic and destabilizing ways. First, recent scientific research links the civil war in Syria to the prolonged drought that was exacerbated by climate change.<sup>1</sup> Syria's civil war has killed several hundred thousand people and displaced over 10 million people. Second, 'Winter Storm Alexa' in December 2013 dumped a several month's worth of heavy rainfall and snow across the region. People died, tens of thousands of people fled from floodwaters, hundreds of thousands lost power, and millions of trees were damaged.

While many have sought to address climate change and other global environmental challenges, activists have yet to succeed in catalyzing a collective global response commensurate with the challenge. This stems in part from the failure to engage those people with the greatest track record of inspiring behavior change: faith leaders, clergy, and teachers. Twenty-five years ago, a group of prominent scientists wrote an open letter calling for faith communities to support them in addressing climate change: "Problems of such magnitude...must be recognized as having a religious as well as a scientific dimension...we scientists urgently appeal to the world religious community in word and deed." <sup>2</sup>

Much of the world's population is involved with a religious or spiritual community. Therefore, it is imperative that emerging clergy learn how their faith relates to environmental balance in order to aid their congregations in the healing of human society. Seminaries influence the reach and impact of future faith leaders. Many faiths understand the ecological crisis to be a spiritual crisis, and the education of emerging clergy in this area is therefore critically important. The many millions of people who suffer from ecological, political and religious conflicts often turn to their faith for support. Heightening the skills of future and current religious leaders and linking them together with a common moral purpose and a greater understanding will inspire action toward a peaceful, just, and sustainable future. Improving emerging clergy's ecological awareness will inspire communities, congregations, and leaders of other sectors in improving human-environment relations.

Common environmental challenges and the responsibility for stewardship among people across faiths can help bring people together. Faith communities working together have leverage to transform people's

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<sup>1</sup> Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought, Kelly et. al, January 2015, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (US), online at <http://www.pnas.org/content/112/11/3241>

<sup>2</sup> Sagan Urges Clerics to Join To Save Globe, Peter Steinfels, January 16, 1990, The New York Times. The article is online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/01/16/science/sagan-urges-clerics-to-join-to-save-globe.html>

behavior and influence their societies and governments. Religious institutions play a unique role in society in encouraging faith adherents to think long term and act morally. Indeed, climate change is fundamentally an issue of intergenerational justice.

The Holy Land contains one of the world's highest concentrations of religious seminaries. In hundreds of Jewish seminaries, and dozens of Christian and Muslim seminaries, students engage in programs of formation in the Holy Land and then go on to teach here or in other locations. A number of these seminaries have embarked on a host of greening initiatives on their campuses. Part of this involves greening of the physical infrastructure of the campus. Another significant aspect of greening seminaries pertains to the level at which ecology and creation care is integrated into curricula. This is manifested via courses that relate to faith and ecology, as well as integrating ecological components into existing courses on other topics.

This Report on Faith and Ecology Courses in Holy Land Seminaries comes on the heels of two Reports that were published in the past eight months by ICSD: The Report on Faith and Ecology Courses in North American Seminaries, and the Report on Catholic Ecology Courses in Catholic Seminaries, both funded by the Julia Burke Foundation. These Reports provide a unique window into the current teaching taking place in seminaries.

## Methodology

This report reviews the level of tuition in the subject of environmental quality among twenty religious institutions throughout Israel. For the purpose of writing this report, various institutions were selected from the three large monotheistic religions, in which qualification of religious leaders is conducted or alternately which offers an advanced program for religious studies. This report comprises nine Jewish institutions, eleven Christian institutions, and one Muslim institution. The information included in this report was collected through personal interviews with senior faculty of the various institutions. The majority of the interviews were conducted in the institutions themselves, while a minority of them, due to technical difficulties, were conducted over the telephone. Supplementary information about the institutions was collected from the institutions' official websites. Likewise, in cases where the institutions provide a course intended (fully or partially) to address issues concerning faith and ecology, the course's syllabus was used as a reference for writing the report.

The institutions that provided interviews were selected based on a number of factors. The authors reached out to all five Catholic seminaries in the Holy Land, as well as to almost all other Christian seminaries in the Holy Land, and to the one Muslim institution in Israel with an Islamic studies department that serves as a basis for those seeking to become imams. The contents of this report in regards to Christian seminaries is

fairly comprehensive. In regards to Muslim and Jewish institutions, the institutions approached is not comprehensive. The reason for this in regards to Muslim seminaries is explained in that section of the Report. In relation to Jewish seminaries, many hundreds of Jewish seminaries exist in Israel, primarily within the haredi (ultra-Orthodox) sector. We reached out to seminaries from the four main Jewish denominations-- Reform, Conservative, National Religious Orthodox, and ultra-Orthodox. For convenience, the main geographic focus of the Jewish seminaries was Jerusalem.

The questions asked during the interviews concerned several subjects. First, the interviewees were asked about the details of the institution of which they are members. The interviewees were asked which educational programs are conducted in the institution, how many students are present in each program, and what content is studied in the curriculum's framework. In addition, the interviewees were asked whether any courses directly addressing ecology and faith are provided within the curriculum in their institution. Similarly, interviewees were asked about additional points of interface between studies in their institution and ecological values. These points of interface include: environmental content arising within the framework of courses that are not oriented towards ecological subjects (such as ethics, theology, Halacha, etc.) and likewise, external lectures, daily seminars, tours, and informal dialogue about environmental issues that occurs within the institution. There were also questions that were adapted to the religious nature of the institution to which they were directed. For example, in interviews with Catholic institutions, the interviewees were asked about the influence of Pope Francis's second encyclical on the curriculum in the institution. Orthodox Christian institutions were asked about the influence of the Patriarch Bartholomew's instruction on the institution's curriculum. Finally, interviewees were asked about their personal opinions about expansion of the dialogue on subjects of sustainability and environment within the framework of the future curriculum in their institution.

## Part 1: Jewish Rabbinical Seminaries

This report includes various and diverse Jewish institutions, among which are Yeshivas, research institutes and institutes of rabbinic qualification. Likewise, the report includes institutes affiliated with various different Jewish movements, including orthodox, conservative and reform institutes. This report does not profess to cover even a small percentage of the total number of Jewish institutes in Israel that deal with rabbinic qualification and advanced studies. In particular, this report minimally addresses institutes from the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) sector. Although these institutes may relate to environmental subjects that stem from the study of Jewish sources, they are characterized by adhering to tradition and it can be assumed that current environmental issues do not receive substantial emphasis in these institutes.

### The Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies

Interview with Dr. Meesh Hammer-Kossoy, lecturer at Pardes Institute,  
and Mrs. Karen Feuer, Assistant to Dr. David I. Bernstein, Dean

*Address: Pierre Koenig St 29, Jerusalem*

#### *About the Institution*

The Pardes Institute is an institute for Jewish education that has been operating in Jerusalem since 1972, and is intended for Jewish students that arrive from abroad, who have finished college. The Institute is open to students from all Jewish backgrounds and the education weaves together traditional world views and a commitment to Orthodox Jewish practice, with an open and pluralistic approach to the study of Jewish source texts. The institute runs a number of educational programs including short and summer programs, long-term programs, and a two-year program, training teachers in Jewish professions. The content of the teaching includes studies of Jewish sources such as the Bible and the Talmud, alongside enrichment studies in a variety of subjects, such as philosophy, spirituality, ethics, and social justice. Additionally, in the dual year program that trains teachers in Jewish subjects there are studies on the topics of pedagogy and lecturing. There are around 60 students enrolled in the long-term programs.

#### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

In the educational program a course on the topic of Social Justice is offered, which is partially devoted to the topic of, the Sabbatical year, consumption, and why environmentalism is a Jewish issue. The course deals with current environmental problems, as well as addressing how these problems may be resolved by studying and researching Jewish source texts. Specifically, the course focuses on issues from Jewish source texts, such as 'Bal Tashchit' ('do not destroy'), the Sabbatical year, and laws from the Talmud regarding animal rights, and asks which solutions are offered by the sources that help address current environmental issues. In addition, during the course there is a yearly field-trip that emphasizes environmentalism, and in

which students visit institutions that offer projects in sustainable development. Finally, environmental subjects are addressed in the guest lectures that take place at the institute, for example, last year there was a lecture on the topic of “Ethical Kashrut” that addressed ethical questions during the process of slaughtering animals.

Environmental values are further expressed within the Pardes Institute in projects that include practical application, such as volunteering. In the long-term program at the Institute, students are asked to be socially active, and students can choose to volunteer in an ecological community garden that is located in the nature museum in Jerusalem. In addition, the Institute commemorates a yearly day of charity, during which the students help harvest agricultural produce.

## Hebrew Union College

Interview with Rabbi Michael Marmur, Vice President for Academic Affairs

*Address: King David St., Jerusalem*

### *About the Institution*

Hebrew Union College (HUC) is an institution that trains rabbis, cantors, educators and communal workers, founded in the USA in 1875 as an institute affiliated with the Jewish reform movement. The Israeli campus, inaugurated in 1963, runs numerous educational programs on cantillation, education, spiritual accompaniment, and social activity. In addition, the institute runs the Israeli program for rabbinic qualification, in which there are approximately twenty students.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Rabbi Marmur stated that on HUC campuses in the US much effort indeed is invested in order to integrate values of sustainability within the curriculum. This manifests in courses taught in the various campuses, which address the relationship between sustainability and Jewish sources, and which also deal with a variety of practical initiatives such as running communal gardens and adapting the buildings for maximal saving of energy on the various campuses. Rabbi Marmur stated that while there is a much greater awareness of sustainability and environmental issues in the campuses in the US, these issues are addressed also in the Israeli campus, as expressed at several levels: first, students in the education program are offered a course, taught at the Hebrew University, on the subject of “The Environmental Crisis and Jewish Education”, by Dr. Eilon Schwartz.

In addition, within the framework of the ongoing studies at HUC, numerous tours and seminars are conducted, in which the students are acquainted with subjects of environmental quality and sustainability. For example, Rabbi Mamur stated, the students visit sites such as the Center for Creative Ecology in Kibbutz Lotan and the site for rehabilitation of the Jordan River. Furthermore, Rabbi Marmur explained that



many HUC students a high level of environmental awareness. Thus, these subjects arise informally within the framework of the studies, in issues such as kosher observance, water policy at HUC, and use of disposable tableware. Rabbi Marmur explained that due to the growing awareness of these subjects among students and staff members, he does indeed see a place for future expansion of this field within the framework of the curriculum in the institute.

### **Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies**

Interview with Rabbi Avi Novis-Deutsch, Dean

*Address: Avraham Granot St. 4, Jerusalem*

#### *About the Institute:*

The Schechter Institute was founded in 1989 as an institute affiliated with the conservative movement and it researches, and teaches, Jewish studies in an egalitarian and pluralistic approach. The Institute offers a master's degree in thirteen different programs, and in addition, acts as an institute for rabbinic qualification. Approximately thirty students study in the seminary program for rabbinic qualification, arriving after completion of their master's degree. The content studied in the seminary program for rabbinical student's deals principally with Talmudic and Halachic studies, but additionally, various other subjects of Jewish studies, enrichment-courses of choice, and practical pedagogic techniques are also learned.

#### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Shechter offers a course every two years on Judaism and ecology as part of its Mishlei MA Program, and some students from this program go on to the Rabbinical School. In 2012 and 2014 Rabbi Tamir Nir taught a course entitled "Sustainable Communities," which deals with understanding the fragile interactions between humans and nature, and with human responsibility for the environment. The course examined Jewish sources and invited an encounter with a holistic worldview that develops environmental responsibility for future generations. In spring 2016, a course on "Jewish Ecology and Spiritual Sustainability" is being taught to the Mishlei Program by Rabbi Yonatan Neril. Rabbi Novis-Deutsch added that issues concerning environmental sustainability arise also informally in the framework of ongoing studies in the Beth Midrash (study hall). Rabbi Novis-Deutsch explained that issues such as damage to neighbors, public domain, common property and ethical food consumption are issues that are discussed from an ecological viewpoint, as part of the Jewish legal studies in the Beth Midrash.

In addition, there are issues discussed outside of the class, such as issues of holy disposal of sacred texts (Geniza), disposable tableware, making the institute accessible to public transport and so on, which constitute an integral part of the Beth Midrash's routine. Rabbi Novis-Deutsch stated that expansion of the dialogue on subjects of environmental conservation within the seminary's framework poses somewhat of a

challenge, given that a specific routine to which the institute is accustomed already exists, and this sometimes limits the borders of what is addressed in the institute. In addition, Rabbi Novis-Deutsch stated that the world of Jewish content raises numerous and complex issues that occupy religious people and hence, subjects of environmental quality are pushed aside. Notwithstanding, Rabbi Novis-Deutsch does indeed see potential for expansion of the inter-religious dialogue on the subject of sustainable development, as this could generate a sense of shared responsibility and constitute a platform for joint efforts.

### **Midreshet Ein HaNatziv**

Interview with Rabbi Yitzhak Ben David, Head of the Institution

*Kibbutz Ein HaNatziv*

#### *About the Institution*

Midreshet Ein HaNatziv is a seminary for women founded in 1986. Approximately thirty women study in the midrasha (house of study), as part of a year-long program before their military service. The midrasha also provides ongoing educational programming during the women's military service. The studies in the midrasha include Jewish law, Talmud, the Bible, rabbinic commentaries, Jewish thought and Hassidic teachings. In addition, subjects such as philosophy, Zionism and psychology are also studied in the midrasha.

#### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Rabbi Ben David related that subjects connected to environmental quality and sustainable development arise within the framework of ongoing activity in the midrasha, in two principal ways. First, daily seminars in which these subjects are discussed, are held in the midrasha. For example, Rabbi Ben David related about such a seminar conducted recently in the midrasha, on the subject of “Jewish sustainability,” in which the students engaged in a profound dialogue and study about the confluence of Jewish sources with values of sustainability. In addition, Rabbi Ben David teaches a weekly lesson in which social and current issues are addressed, among which also environmental issues arise. Rabbi Ben David’s lessons promote a critical view of the capitalistic economic system, which is characterized by a desire for maximal economic growth and by enhanced consumerism, and the environmental and social ramifications of this system are addressed. Rabbi Ben David asserted that he would be happy to see the development of this subject within the midrasha.

### **The Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem**

Interview with Rabbi Joel Levy, Head of the Institution

*Address: Agron St, Jerusalem*

### *About the Institution*

The Conservative Yeshiva was founded in Jerusalem in 1995, under the auspices of the conservative movement in the US. The majority of students arrive in Israel from abroad, in the framework of more comprehensive rabbinical training studies. The students, most of whom arrive from the US, study in the Yeshiva (seminary) for between one semester to a full academic year, in order to integrate values of studying in the Holy Land and acquaint themselves with it, in their course of training. The Yeshiva program includes studying of sources such as the Bible, Mishnah and Talmud, alongside theology, Hassidism and philosophy. Approximately thirty students study in the Yeshiva.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Rabbi Levy stated that while there is no dedicated time-slot for environmental content in the Yeshiva, such issues do indeed arise in the framework of the Yeshiva dialogue, due to the importance that the Yeshiva members attribute to this subject. Rabbi Levy stated that during the Sabbatical year the Yeshiva conducted a series of meetings on the subject of “the ecological relevance of the Sabbatical year today”, in which various subjects relating to human ownership and responsibility towards nature were discussed. In addition, Rabbi Levy tells of a tradition in the Yeshiva, in which every morning the Yeshiva members read a quote from the book of Genesis, chapter one, in order to encourage personal responsibility of people towards creation.

Moreover, the Yeshiva runs a weekly program the task of which is to acquaint the Yeshiva students with various issues in Israeli society. In the framework of this program, the Yeshiva hosts external lectures and sends the students on various tours concerned with subjects of society, politics, and quality of the environment.

Environmental values manifest also in the framework of the practical-voluntary work in the Yeshiva, given that the students partake in activities such as: working in the community-garden, agricultural gleaning, and projects of maintaining cleanliness in the public domain. Rabbi Levy stated that he attributes much importance to subjects of environmental quality and sustainable development and hopes for continuance of such activity in the Yeshiva.

### **Yeshivat Ma’ale Gilboa**

Interview with Rabbi Shmuel Reiner, Head of the Institution

*Address: Kibbutz Ma’ale Gilboa*

### *About the Institution*

Yeshivat Ma’ale Gilboa was founded in 1993, and students partake of full (three years) of military service integrated with two additional years of studying in the Yeshiva, hence the full Yeshiva program lasts five



years. The educational content studied in the Yeshiva is varied, and alongside Biblical and Talmudic studies, Jewish thought, rabbinical commentaries, and additional religious subjects, politics and education are also studied in the Yeshiva. The Yeshiva numbers approximately three hundred students, the majority of whom are currently serving in the IDF and approximately one hundred students are present in the Yeshiva. In addition, approximately thirty married students study in the Yeshiva. These have completed their military service and return to the Yeshiva for a period spanning one to two years.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Rabbi Reiner stated that while the study program does not include a dedicated time-slot for subjects of environmental quality, these subjects do arise informally in the framework of Yeshiva dialogue, given that much attention is directed towards the moral purpose of Yeshiva members and in this context dilemmas of the relationship between people and the environment also arise. Rabbi Reiner asserted that the Yeshiva is by nature an open and inclusive institute enabling its students to conduct a profound moral dialogue, in which there is a place for subjects related to environmental quality, given that these values compose the world-views of some of the students in the Yeshiva. Likewise, subjects related to quality of environment arise in the context of Jewish legal dilemmas discussed in the lessons, such as the issues of disposal of sacred texts and the Sabbatical Year.

Environmental content manifests also within the practical framework of the Yeshiva. A group of special-needs students study in the Yeshiva, and volunteer in the Beit She'an regional council's agricultural farm, which is an educational-environmental farm. In addition, this group, with the accompaniment and guidance of the Kinneret administration, conducted several projects in order to clean the beach areas of the Sea of Galilee. In summary, Rabbi Reiner stated that while these subjects are not an organic part of the Yeshiva's interests, they can certainly be integrated within the framework of external lectures that take place in the Yeshiva, and particularly if religious studies can be integrated with values pertaining to environmental conservation

### **Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (REITS) of Yeshiva University, Israel Campus**

Interview with Rabbi David Miller, Director

*Address: Barukh Duvdevani St., Jerusalem*

### *About the Institution*

This Seminary is a branch of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) of Yeshiva University, located in New York City. The Seminary offers rabbinical studies for students that have completed their bachelor's degree. The studies in the Yeshiva span approximately four years, and in its framework the students may choose to travel to Israel and study in the branch situated there. Each student

arrives for a different time period, according to his personal preference. The majority of students are married and live on the Yeshiva campus. After completing the studies, most students return to the US to serve as rabbis and a minority remains in Israel and continue studying in kollels (adult institutes of Jewish learning). The content studied in the institute is intended to train students for rabbinical ordination and includes the study of Jewish sources, such as: Talmud, Responsa, Jewish thought and Jewish history.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Rabbi Miller stated that while there is no dedicated program for content relating to quality of environment and sustainable development, environmental dilemmas do indeed arise during the ongoing studies in the Yeshiva, and particularly when discussing Halachic issues such as the Sabbatical Year and Bal Tashchit (do not destroy) in class. In addition, Rabbi Miller explained that the students, who are intended to serve as rabbis in the future, occupy themselves also with universal values and ask how these can be implemented within the framework of their communal work. Hence, dilemmas in the subjects of ecology and environment arise during the studies. Rabbi Miller explained that while he believes that issues pertaining to quality of environment are indeed important, there are more urgent issues that must receive the attention in the framework of the Yeshiva studies. Subjects such as the security situation, the complexity of the Middle East, assimilation and life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – are all current issues that rank at the top of the Yeshiva's priorities, and subjects pertaining to quality of environment are pushed aside. Notwithstanding, Rabbi Miller stated that recognizing the importance of conserving nature, which stems from the understanding that there is an image of God in each human being, and that the world was given to us as a gift to be treasured, is the "daily bread" of every Jew. Hence, environmental values are accepted as obvious within the Yeshiva framework. Rabbi Miller stated also that the Yeshiva routinely and meticulously recycles, and in addition, many of the students make organic compost as part of their way of life.

### *Yeshivat Har Etzion*

Interview with Rabbi Daniel Wolf, Lecturer

*Address: Alon Shvut, Gush Ezion*

### *About the Institution*

Yeshivat Har Etzion was founded in 1968 as a 'Hesder Yeshiva,' a seminary in which students participate in a five year long program integrating studies in the Yeshiva with military service. Besides this framework, the Yeshiva also runs additional programs including a one or two year program for students from abroad, a 'Kolel' program for students who have completed their studies in the Hesder Yeshiva, rabbinic ordination studies, and an educational program that integrates students with special needs. Bible, Talmud, Halacha and Jewish thought are studied in the Yeshiva.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Rabbi Wolf stated that the Yeshiva curriculum does not include any dedicated focus on the subject of environmental qualities. However, there are environmental issues that have been debated in the Yeshiva in informal frameworks. As an example, Rabbi Wolf related that issues of vegetarianism, kosher slaughter, and energy use have all occupied both students and faculty in the Yeshiva. In addition, Rabbi Wolf explained that the Yeshiva routinely conducts hikes in nature, which interface with subjects of environmental quality and particularly with the question of conditions in animal farms. Rabbi Wolf asserted that these subjects, which relate to the relationship between people and the environment, are of utmost moral importance and that he hopes that the students in the Yeshiva will be aware of the environmental problems that plague the world in our time.

### **Ohr Somayach Yeshiva**

Interview with R' Guy Matalon, Preparatory Program Head and lecturer *Address: Shimon Hatzadik St 22, Jerusalem*

### *About the Institution*

Ohr Somayach Yeshiva was founded in 1970 as an institution that emphasized a return to Jewish values. The institution focuses on students who begin with a limited background in Jewish studies. The institution hosts programs for beginners, high school graduates, and offers different stages of Yeshiva studies. In addition, the institution offers a “kolel” learning program for married students, as well as a program that offers instruction in rabbinical training. Most of the students that study at the Yeshiva arrive from abroad, and the studies are taught in the English language. The content of the studies deals mainly in Talmud, Jewish law, and interpretation. Around 400 students are enrolled at the institution.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Rabbi Matlon stated that while there is no program that is dedicated to environmental values, these subjects are addressed when they arise out of the studies of Jewish source texts. However, there are faculty members and students that address environmental subjects and hold informal discussions on the subject. In addition, the institution hosts regular tours that pertain to familiarization with the Israeli landscape. In the context of the tours, which are held in locations such as the Judean Desert, Golan Heights, the Dead Sea, the Arava Valley, and Jordan Valley, students spend time in nature, and learn about geography and local wildlife. Rabbi Matlon stated that environmental subjects do not play a dominant role in the studies at the Yeshiva for two reasons: the first is that the aim of the Yeshiva is to give new students basic tools in the field of Jewish law, and the second is the fact that the program at the Yeshiva is dictated by the traditional approach of the sages of Israel, and as such, the program mostly deals with Talmud and interpretation, and it is difficult to reinvent the program and integrate content that addresses the environment.



## Part II: Christian Seminaries

This report includes various Christian seminaries active in Israel and the West Bank. The report contains references to Christian seminaries that train emerging clergy, host seminary students from abroad, and offer advanced degrees in religious fields. The ones included in this report belong to different Christian denominations, including Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican.

### Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Seminary

Interview with Father Jamal Khader, Head of Beit Jala Seminary

*Address: Beit Jala*

#### *About the Institution*

The seminary of the Latin Patriarchate in Beit Jala was founded in 1936. The seminary currently runs two educational programs: the first is a program for high-school studies and the second is a program that trains students for clergy. The majority of students in the seminary arrive from the West Bank and from Jordan, and the lessons are conducted in Arabic. The formation period for students in the seminary greatly emphasizes the students' future community work and combines, together with the holy studies, also volunteering in the community.

#### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Values of nature conservation and environmental awareness manifest in the seminary in many and varied ways. First, the ongoing logistical maintenance of the seminary is conducted in accordance with the value of sustainability. Father Khader related that fruit trees and vegetables are grown in the seminary and tended voluntarily by the students. The students in the seminary also actively participate in the production of olive oil, which is carried out on-site. Father Khader related also that there is much awareness for economical water usage among the seminary students, as rainwater is collected and grey water is recycled in the seminary grounds, and these are then used for irrigation of the various crops. The seminary is also active in the field of clean and renewable energy awareness. Hence, Father Khader explained that the seminary's building was renovated to enable reduction in the heating costs, and in addition, solar panels were installed in the seminary.

Father Khader stated that conservation issues are expressed also in the framework of the ongoing studies in the seminary. Lessons such as theological anthropology and social ethics, in which numerous environmental dilemmas arise, are taught in the seminary. These issues include human responsibility for natural creation and a historical view of the issue of concern for natural resources as opposed to their Dominance. During the archaeological studies in the seminary, numerous tours are conducted in order to acquaint the students with

the land, and these emphasize connection to nature and meditative reflection. Father Khader added that the connection to the Holy Land is a subject that receives much emphasis in the seminary, due to the fact that Jesus was born and active in the Land of Israel. Moreover, since the publication of Pope Francis's Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, this subject is learned in a systematic, deep and theological manner within the framework of the lessons that Father Khader himself teaches. *Laudato Si'* relates to subjects such as human responsibility towards nature, consumerism and global warming, and students study it at two main levels: first, the personal level, which addresses personal responsibility of being a good Christian, caring for the land given to him by God, and adapting his habits towards environmental responsibility; and second, on the level of collective and universal awareness of the environmental challenges that face our world today. Ultimately, Father Khader stated that the studies in the seminary are profoundly directed towards human justice, be it in the political, financial or environmental aspects.

### **Swedish Theological Institute**

#### **Interview with Mrs. Carin Gardbring, International Course Manager**

##### **Hanevi'im St. #58, Jerusalem**

##### *About the Institute:*

The Swedish Theological Institute (STI) was founded in Jerusalem in 1951 by the Swedish Church. The Institute hosts a large number of short-term programs each year, in which dozens of Protestant bishops, pastors, and theologians from around the world participate. The content of these programs focuses principally on theological issues, inter-religious dialogue, and current social issues. The various programs acquaint participants with Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and address numerous social issues, such as gender issues, peace and reconciliation and environmental quality.

##### *Instruction on Subjects of Faith and Ecology:*

Mrs. Gardbring stated that the Institute integrates many lectures and tours that address environmental quality into the various curricula. Each year STI selects a general subject that governs the content discussed in the various programs. Last year STI addressed the subject "soil, humans, theology, and sustainable development in Israel and Palestine", in the framework of which the students addressed many issues related to environmental quality. Within the program's framework lectures pertaining to environmental quality were conducted, including a lecture entitled "Environmental Accomplishments and Challenges in the Holy City", which was delivered by the environmental activist and former vice-mayor, Naomi Tsur. Another lecture provided in the framework of the program addressed "Soil and Environment" and was delivered by Simon Awad. Finally, a series of lectures was conducted on the subject of the various religions' treatment and

relation to water sources, and these were delivered by Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway and Ofir Yarden. In addition to frontal lectures, the students also conducted ecological tours in sites such as the Center for Creative Ecology in Lotan, the Jordan River, and Neot Kedumim.

Mrs. Gardbring related that this year, while the yearly subject of the programs has been changed, many contents addressing environmental quality are still integrated within the frameworks of the various programs. Many lectures pertaining to these values are integrated into the current curriculum, including a lecture of the subject of “A Faith-based Perspective on Addressing Climate Change” by Rabbi Yonatan Neril, a lecture on the subject of “Sustainability in Jerusalem – Accomplishments and Challenges” by Rabbi Tamir Nir, and a lecture on the subject of “the importance of olive trees in the heritage, culture, and life of the Palestinian people”. Ultimately, Mrs. Gardbring states that STI aims to continue developing the integration of content addressing environmental quality in the majority of programs provided by the Institute. In addition, Mrs. the Institute is implementing ecological values also in the administration and ongoing maintenance of the physical grounds. The Church of Sweden has a certificate program for houses worship on sustainability, and STI has such a certificate. They have an on-site staff member who is a trained engineer and oversees their program. For example, they are installing solar panels on their buildings.

### **Tantur Ecumenical Institute**

Interview with Father Russell McDougall, Rector

*Address: HaRosmarin st, Jerusalem*

#### **About the Institution**

The Tantur Institute was founded in 1972, following the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church. The Institute deals with research of Christian theology and aims to bring closeness and understanding between the various Christian movements. Another essential value the academy holds is acquaintance with the Holy Land and a profound meeting with the history, culture and religion in the Land of Israel. The Institute’s administrative aspects are conducted through the University of Notre Dame, which is located in the USA. Tantur is an institute that does not provide diplomas independently, rather it hosts students from various courses on education. The institute hosts academics on sabbatical who arrive in order to conduct theological research in the Land of Israel. In addition, students of all degrees of academic education are hosted in the institute for varying periods of time and for various different programs, and they integrate courses in the University of Bethlehem and in the Hebrew university, together with their studies at Tantur. Finally, both clergy and secular people who arrive for continuing studies in a variety of subjects, are present in the institute.



### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Within the framework of studies in the institute, a series of meetings between the students, in their various programs, and the environmental activist and tour guide Jared Goldfarb is conducted. Father McDougall related that within the framework of these meetings, joint lessons guided by Father McDougall and Jared Goldfarb were conducted, in which environmental issues were discussed through examination of the sources of the different religions. In these lessons Jewish sources and rabbinic commentaries were discussed together with a profound discussion of the second encyclical of Pope Francis, which deals with environmental conservation. In addition, within the framework of the meetings with Jared Goldfarb, the students are sent on various tours in Israeli nature, in which a profound examination of various environmental issues is conducted. For example, Father McDougall described tours to the Dead Sea that address the environmental challenges plaguing this area. Furthermore, Father McDougall related that addressing environmental issues occurs also through the practical work in the institute. There are cases in which students, as part of their time in the institute, choose to volunteer with various human rights organizations, which deal also with issues of environmental justice.

### *Studium Theologicum Salesianum*

Interview with Dr Biju Michael, President of the institution

*Address: Shmuel HaNagid St., Jerusalem*

### *About the Institution*

The Studium Theologicum Salesianum is the successor of the Salesian Center founded in Bethlehem in 1929. In September 2004 the institute was reopened in Jerusalem, under its current name, as a branch of the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, and English was determined as the language of institution in the seminary. The study program spans approximately four years at the end of which the students are qualified as clergy and receive a bachelor's degree in theology. The content studied in the institute includes: biblical studies, archaeology, theology, history, and Jewish and Islamic studies. Approximately fifty students study in the seminary, which is also known as the 'Ratisbonne Seminary.'

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Father Biju related that he himself teaches a course on the subject of theology and ethics, and in the framework of this course, subjects related to environmental quality and sustainable development are addressed. In the framework of the course, Father Biju customarily shows the students a documentary film on climate change, and conducts various lectures and dialogues about environmental issues. In addition, Father Biju related that the seminary regularly conducts archaeological tours to various sites in Israel and likewise the students participate in external conferences and seminars which interface with environmental

values. For example, Father Biju stated that the students helped in the organization of, and participated in the Faith and Ecology Conference in Jerusalem in 2014, in collaboration with the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. Father Biju positively views the expansion of studies in environmental issues within the framework of the curriculum and also points out that there is a need for textbooks that will serve Christian clergy and integrate religious studies with ecology.

### **Domus Mamre**

Interview with Rev. Felipe Torreblanca, Director

*Address: Ras El' Amud, Jerusalem*

#### *About the Institution*

Domus Mamre is a Catholic institution that hosts students from various Seminaries around the world. The students arrive for a period of approximately half a year to a year, while for half of the duration the students reside in the “Domus Galilaeae” center in the north of Israel, and the other half is spent in Domus Mamre. The students divide their time between social-volunteering work and study of the Holy Scriptures, archaeology and Jewish studies. The studies take place in collaboration with the Franciscan and Dominican orders that reside in Israel. Today, approximately twenty students reside in Domus Mamre.

#### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Father Torreblanca stated that the curriculum in Domus Mamre does not include content dedicated to environmental issues and sustainable development, given that the instructional content is intended to address the unique needs of the Seminary students who visit Israel for a limited period of time only. Father Torreblanca added that the students who arrive in Domus Mamre do indeed systematically address these issues in the framework of their comprehensive studies as Seminary students in the lands of their origin. Father Torreblanca explained that the Seminaries that send their students to be hosted in Domus Mamre teach subjects such as philosophy and theology of nature, social ethics and general philosophy, and within the framework of these studies, questions such as human responsibility for natural creations and the environmental significance derived from man being created in the image of God, are discussed. In addition, Father Torreblanca related that the students in Domus Mamre study in depth the second Encyclical of Pope Francis, the *Laudato si'*, which addresses human responsibility towards the natural environment. In-depth discussion and study, following the *Laudato si'*, are conducted in the framework of Domus Mamre, viewing environmental issues and their anthropogenic origins through a theological prism. Father Torreblanca added that in his view, on an individual level, the discovery of God and submission to a greater order, are vital in order to start relating to the ecological crises that are befalling our world today. Father Torreblanca believes that due to the comprehensive distribution of the *Laudato si'* document, there is

a place to expand the study of these subjects in the Catholic world in general and in Domus Mamre in particular.

### **Domus Galilaeae**

Interview with Father Francesco Giosue Voltaggio, Rector

Mount of Beatitudes, Sea of Galilee

#### *About the Institution*

Domus Galilaeae is a Catholic seminary that was founded in 2000 as a branch of the Pontifical Lateran Seminary, which is located in Rome. The seminary is under the auspices of the organization of “The Neocatechumenal Way”. Domus Galilaeae hosts students from various seminaries around the world who come for periods of approximately half a year to a year. Half of the duration is spent in the Domus Galilaeae center in northern Israel while the other half is spent in Domus Mamre, which is located in Ras El’ Amud. Approximately forty students study in the seminary and tuition is conducted in Italian.

#### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

While the institute does not offer a course dedicated to the subject of faith and ecology, the curriculum does offer a course in the subject of bioethics and social ethics, in which environmental issues are addressed. The course is taught by Father Aquilino Cayvela, who is a guest professor from Valencia, Spain. In addition, given that the institute is faithful to the Pope’s teachings, much attention is devoted to Pope Francis’s second encyclical, the *Laudato si’*, which addresses the question of human responsibility for the natural environment. Father Francesco stated that there is a possibility that studies of faith and ecology will be expanded in the future within the framework of Domus Galilaeae.

### **Christ Church**

Interview with Rev. David Pileggi, Rector

*Address: Jaffa Gate, Old City, Jerusalem*

#### *About the Institution*

Christ Church in Jerusalem is an Anglican institution, which offers a variety of educational programs for clergy and seminarians in addition to being a house of worship. Specifically, the church trains and educates religious leaders who travel from abroad in order to participate in short-term programs at the church. Hundreds of participants engage in these programs each year, with most of them arriving from Africa and Asia.



### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Rev. Pileggi stated that while environmental subjects are important and there is awareness of their importance, there are more urgent needs that the reality 'on the ground' dictates, and these constitute the focus of their short-term programs. The students in the short-term program arrive from developing countries, and so the subjects of utmost importance for them to deal with here in Israel are: ethnic sectarianism, innovation in the field of health, infrastructure, and poverty reduction. In other words, the church prefers to address more urgent needs in its program. However, as an integral component of the various training programs, students visit Israeli institutions that offer innovative technologies in different fields. The goal of these visits is to present technological solutions that can assist visitors, and in addition, environmental solutions are presented. For example, renewable energy, water treatment plants, and various agricultural systems. Rev Pileggi stated that the area of sustainable development, which integrates practical tools and environmental awareness, is a subject that can be integrated into the various programs at the church.

### **Franciscan Seminary of the Holy Land**

Interview with Father Alberto Pari, Vice Director of Magnificat Institute

*Address: Custodia De Terra Santa, Old City, Jerusalem*

#### *About the Institution*

Approximately forty students specializing in theological studies and archaeology study in the Franciscan Seminary in the Holy Land. In this institute, Franciscan monks arriving in the Land of Israel from various countries around the world study alongside other students who are not monks. Studies span approximately six years and are conducted in the Italian language.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Father Pari stated that the institute does not dedicate a formal time-slot to the discussion of environmental values, however, Father Pari noted that these subjects do indeed arise informally within the framework of the studies in the institute. Theology, scholastics and Christian dogma, Father Pari explained, can indeed give rise to dialogue on the subject of the relationship between man, God, and nature. In addition, Father Pari stated that the second Encyclical of the Pope Francis, the *Laudato si'*, which deals with environmental conservation, greatly influenced the informal discourse that occurs in the Seminary, however its contents have not been imparted within the framework of formal studies. Moreover, Father Pari explained that within the framework of the curriculum in the Seminary, students participate in archaeological tours in Israeli nature, in which environmental conservation is emphasized. The majority of students who come to study in the Franciscan Seminary in the Land of Israel, arrive following a two year long preliminary program that greatly emphasizes the philosophical and theological principles of Francis of Assisi. Hence, Father Pari

explained that the students arrive after having addressed philosophical, universal and moral values, including those relating to the environment, and due to this, the Seminary in the Land of Israel deals less with these areas.

### **Studium Biblicum Franciscanum**

Interview with Father Massimo Pazzini, Dean

*Address: Via Dolorosa st, Old City, Jerusalem*

#### ***About the Institution***

Studium Biblicum Franciscanum was founded in 2001 as a delegation of the Pontifical Antonianum University, which is located in Rome. The institution offers academic tracks in higher education, offering BA, MA, and PhD degrees. The institution specializes in the study of source texts (Old and New Testament), language studies (Greek, Aramaic, and Syrian), and archeological studies. Most of the students at the institution arrive from Italy, and as such, the studies are taught in Italian. 120 students study at the institution.

#### ***Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology***

Father Pazzini stated that, as the work that the institution excels in is very specific, and there is no clear orientation toward the study of environmentalism. Father Pazzini added that environmental subjects are discussed at the institution's main branch in Rome, because the program there deals more often with philosophical and theological questions. As such, Pazzini stated that the university in Rome has a felt closeness to the Vatican, and the Pope's documents are discussed there in a deep way, including the *Laudato Si* encyclical, which deals with environmental issues. Since the institution's delegation in Israel, as aforesaid, focuses on particular subjects, therefore broader subjects are explored to a lesser degree. However, Father Pazzini stated that the Franciscan thought and philosophy emphasizes the relationship between humans and nature, and these subjects may emerge informally within the program at the Israeli institution. In addition, Father Pazzini stated that a regular aspect of the program includes tours that emphasize biblical archeology. Within the framework of these tours, which mostly take place in Jerusalem, the Galilee, and the Judean desert, the students receive enrichment studies on the subjects of geography and plant life.

### **Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Français**

Interview with Dr. Marcel Sigrist, Director

*Address: Nablus Road, Jerusalem*

### *About the Institution*

This institute was founded in 1890 by the monks of the French Dominican order. Ecole Biblique is an institute of higher education specializing in archaeological and biblical studies. The institute provides qualifications for Ph.D and likewise serves as a host institute for students from various universities around the world who come to the Land of Israel in order to specialize in the areas of biblical and archaeological studies. Ecole Biblique provides these students with an academic work environment and access to the institute's library, which comprises approximately 400,000 titles in the fields of the Old Testament, hermeneutics, archaeology of the Land of Israel, languages and external scripts. Approximately thirty students study in the institute currently.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Dr. Sigrist stated that there is no specific study related to environment and sustainable development. However, Dr. Sigrist described how, due to the considerable attention invested by the institute in the field of archaeology, students are exposed to nature in the Land of Israel during the many archaeological tours in the framework of their studies. While the main focus of the tours is on archaeological and historical aspects, subjects related to familiarity with nature and environment are learned. Dr. Sigrist added that content relating to environmental issues hardly arises within the framework of Ecole Biblique's curriculum, due to the fact that this institute specializes in highly specific areas. However, Dr. Sigrist stated that the Ecole Biblique is an open institute, which hosts students from different and varied backgrounds, and there is nothing to prevent these issues from arising in the future within the framework of the fields of research of the students and researchers active in the institute.

### *Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem Seminary*

Interview with Father Theodoros Zakaryan, Dean of the Seminary

*Address: Armenian Quarter, Old City, Jerusalem*

### *About the Institution*

The Armenian Seminary in Jerusalem was established in 1853. The Seminary currently offers two educational tracks. The first is a Seminar that educates 15 year olds and above. The subjects that are offered in the seminar are predominantly religious studies including the Old Testament and the New Testament, as well as language studies, specifically Arabic, English, and classical Armenian. The seminar takes 4-5 years to complete. The second track is an Institute of Theology, which offers an education in a variety of humanistic subjects such as history, literature, philosophy, sociology, and languages, as well as religious studies and theology, for example, the history of religion, Christology, the writings of the founders of the church, and world religions. In addition, the students acquire practical tools that inform their roles within the

Priesthood. This track takes around 4 years to complete, and at its culmination, students decide whether they would like to serve as married or celibate priests. There were 40 students attending the institution.

### *Instruction on the Subject of Faith and Ecology*

Father Theodoros noted that subjects such as environmental studies and the preservation of resources are subjects of high moral importance. In the past, classes were offered in the sciences, such as physics and biology, but today these subjects are no longer a part of the curriculum. Father Theodoros stated that although subjects that pertain to the environment do not appear in a formal way in the curriculum, these subjects are discussed in enrichment studies and in lectures from outside sources. Father Theodoros sees the expansion of the dialogue on the environment within the Seminary in a positive light.

## **Part III: Islamic Institutions**

There is only one Islamic studies institute in Israel, which itself provides preparatory training for emerging Imams but not the final level of education for them. The reasons why there are so few educational institutions within Israel that deal with the training of Imams and advanced Islamic studies is beyond the scope of this Report. Israeli Muslim Arab students who seek advanced training in Islamic studies travel to Palestinian institutions in the West Bank, or to neighbouring Arab states like Jordan and Egypt. These Islamic institutions are located beyond the Green Line, in the West Bank, and the Israeli author of this Report was unable to conduct interviews in these areas, due to complex political and security considerations. Hence, due to these complex circumstances, and despite significant efforts by the authors, this report only minimally addresses Islamic institutions.

### **Islamic Studies Department, Al Qasemi College**

Interview with Dr. Ali Jabreen, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

P.O.Box 124, Baqa-El-Gharbia

### *About the Institution*

Al Qasemi College was founded in 1989 as an academy for higher education. The College specializes in Islamic studies, Arabic languages, literature, mathematics, computers and education. The department of Islamic studies at Al Qasemi comprises two main programs. There is a primary program, with approximately two hundred and fifty students, and a secondary program with approximately seventy students. The program is a full academic program in which the students learn a variety of Islamic studies in addition to enrichment studies in the subject of education.

*Instruction on subjects of Faith and Ecology*

Dr. Ali Jabreen stated that subjects related to environmental quality are a top priority in the Al Qasemi College and are an integral part of the college's culture. Dialogue on the subject of environmental conservation and sustainable development values is frequently conducted among students and faculty active in the College. In addition, it is hoped that the campus will be transformed into a green campus that will address a variety of environmental challenges. Environmental subjects manifest not only in the campus's atmosphere and infrastructure, but also in the framework of its curriculum. Both of the aforementioned programs include an obligatory course entitled "Introduction to Sustainability and Environmental Education." The College in general, with its various departments, frequently conducts conferences and tours on subjects relating to environmental quality. It has collaborated in the past with the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development on interfaith seminars for its students in multiple locations, including the Jordan River, the Yarkon Park Nature Reserve, and in Jerusalem. Ultimately, Dr. Jabreen asserted that the Al Qasemi College is an open institute that encourages dialogue and collaboration in many subjects, including also subjects concerning environmental quality. Hence, and because the Islamic religion positively views values of environmental concern, Dr. Jabreen hopes for additional collaborations in these subjects.



## Summary

The data above indicates that most seminaries in the Holy Land engage in some way with the field of ecology as part of their educational program, yet few seminaries offer a full course on faith and ecology. Oftentimes a seminary dean, when asked whether he or she would include faith and ecology formally within the curriculum, responds that the current program of formation is so full that there is no room to add anything.

In North America, since the 1980s, significant efforts have been made to promote the integration of creation care in theological education at seminaries in North America. These include the initiative Theological Education to Meet the Environmental Challenge, as well as ongoing efforts by the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale, the American Academy of Religion's Religion and Ecology Group, the Green Seminary Initiative, and the Seminary Stewardship Alliance. A 2015 Report on Faith and Ecology in North American Seminaries published by The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development (ICSD) shows how progress has been made. In recent years, more than 190 courses on faith and ecology have been offered at 58 institutions training seminarians in the United States and Canada. ICSD surveyed over 250 seminaries, and found that 22% offered such courses. Yet about 78% of seminaries therefore do not offer a course focused on faith and ecology, despite the efforts made over the past 35 years. **By contrast, seminaries in the Holy Land are offering full courses on faith and ecology at a much lower rate than those in North America.**

This may be due in part due to the differential in ecological awareness between the two places.

A 2014 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute and the American Academy of Religion found that "most Americans who attend religious services at least once or twice a month hear little from their clergy leaders about the issue of climate change."<sup>3</sup> Since seminaries produce clergy who then speak in houses of worship, and North American seminaries have more teaching on this subject than Holy Land seminaries, it follows logically that houses of worship in the Holy Land likely have fewer clergy speaking on climate change than in North America. This may help explain why public awareness in the Holy Land is comparatively lower, and why Israel's goals that it committed to at the UN climate conference in Paris in December 2015 were comparatively unambitious compared to countries like Germany and Denmark.

What are some of the reasons why most seminaries in the Holy Land do not offer a full course on faith and ecology?

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<sup>3</sup> "Believers, Sympathizers, and Skeptics: Why Americans are Conflicted about Climate Change, Environmental Policy, and Science," Nov. 21, 2014, online at <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/2014-Climate-Change-FINAL1.pdf>

- Theological schools tend to be conservative, which impacts their orientation to offering courses on modern topics like ecology (a discipline which in universities only emerged in the 1970s).
- For some conservative seminary deans, ecology is perceived as a liberal issue and therefore outside of the realm of their ideological framework. Many therefore oppose including it as part of the formation process.
- Seminary leadership themselves most likely never studied about the connection between faith and ecology in their theological education, and thus may be not fully acquainted with the teachings in their tradition on environmental sustainability.
- Some seminaries are under major financial pressure, due to a major decline in enrollment of full-time students, which impacts their ability to offer new courses

Within Catholic seminaries in particular, the following factors are also significant:

- Catholic seminaries are already heavy with requirements in philosophy, systematic and moral theology, Latin, Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, liturgical teaching, patristics (early Christian history), sacred music, and other topics, and there is not a lot of flexibility in the curriculum. This also applies to Orthodox Christian seminaries.
- Therefore, environmental themes of *Laudato Si* will be incorporated into existing social justice courses, which are required at most Catholic seminaries, but not offered as separate courses.
- Many seminary deans and bishops say a top down mandate from the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy is required to change seminary curriculum in this area, inwhile many at the top say a groundwell from below is required.
- There is little effort to connect the doctrine of creation with the doctrine of redemption.

Within Orthodox Jewish seminaries (national religious and ultra-Orthodox (haredi) in particular, the following factors are also significant:

- The bulk of the rabbinical training is focused on the study of Talmud and Jewish law. Within the Talmud learning, particular focus is given to the study of damages and tort law, and marriage and divorce law. Within Jewish law, the focus is on the keeping kosher, observing Shabbat, and menstrual purity. The aspects of Jewish law that relate to ecology, including 'Bal tashchit,' are generally overlooked. The exception is when seminaries study certain sections of the Talmud that relate to ecology, like the 2nd chapter of Tractate Baba Batra on environmental damages, or Tractate Ta'anit on drought in Israel. Yet even when these sections are studied, it requires a teacher with an awareness of ecological issues to connect the Talmudic learning to modern ecological issues.

## Recommendations for Further Engagement on Faith and Ecology Teaching in Seminaries

As possible next steps in follow up to this Report, the authors submit the following recommendations:

- Expand the availability online of seminary faith and ecology course syllabi and reading lists, beyond existing databases.
- Convene a regional faculty seminars of seminary deans and faculty to brainstorm together and promote information sharing for teaching on faith and ecology. This would be a follow up to such a seminar co-organized by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development, with 20 participants in Jerusalem in October, 2015.
- Convene a meeting of seminary students in the Holy Land with a particular interest in ecological issues, to empower them to serve as change agents within their seminaries to promote greater engagement on this issue.
- Encourage the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy to include in the revised version of the Ratio Fundamentalis a mandate that Catholic seminaries incorporate a standard number of credit hours related to ecology into their coursework.

## About the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development (ICSD), works to catalyze a transition to a sustainable human society through the active leadership of faith communities. Its work focuses on four projects. First, the Interfaith Eco Seminary Engagement Project promotes courses for seminarians on faith and the environment. Second, the United Planet Faith & Science Initiative convenes virtual meetings and live events of clergy and scientists, and creates short videos from the events that are spread via social media to promote public awareness, political will, and action. Third, the Women's Faith and Ecology Project engages women of faith in Jerusalem in seminars focused on religion, coexistence, and environmental stewardship. Fourth, ICSD co-organizes interfaith environmental conferences and interfaith eco fairs in Jerusalem. It co-organized, together with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, a 2014 conference for seminary students and faculty with 100 participants. ICSD is a registered non-profit organization in Israel, and has fiscal sponsors in the U.S., U.K., and Canada.

## About the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Freedom, justice and solidarity are the basic principles underlying the work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). The KAS is a political foundation, closely associated with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU). As co-founder of the CDU and the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of

Germany, Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967) united Christian-social, conservative and liberal traditions. His name is synonymous with the democratic reconstruction of Germany, the firm alignment of foreign policy with the trans-Atlantic community of values, the vision of a unified Europe and an orientation towards the social market economy. His intellectual heritage continues to serve both as our aim as well as our obligation today.

55 years ago, Konrad Adenauer and David Ben-Gurion laid the foundation for reconciliation between Germany and Israel and for a future of both nations based on partnership. Carrying on this legacy, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has been an active facilitator in Israel since 1982.

In cooperation with local partner organizations we commit ourselves to three major objectives:

- We strive to preserve and further develop the relationship between **Germany and Israel**. This task is increasingly acquiring a European dimension.
- We support the strengthening of **democracy and the rule of law** in Israel.
- We promote ideas and efforts seeking a **peaceful coexistence** between Israel and its neighbours.

### About the Authors

**Ari Ben-Arie** earned a B.A. in Religious Studies and Political Science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He also completed a year-long course in Permaculture Design at The Centre for Creative Ecology in Kibbutz Lotan. Ari is an environmental activist and is engaged in instruction, training and coordination of various projects related to social and environmental values. Ari is married and lives in Jerusalem and with his wife Achinoam.

**Rabbi Yonatan Neril** founded and directs the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development. A native of California, Yonatan completed an M.A. and B.A. from Stanford University with a focus on global environmental issues, and received rabbinical ordination in Israel. He has spoken internationally on religion and the environment, and organized three interfaith environmental conferences in Jerusalem in which religious leaders of several faiths spoke. He is the lead author and general editor of two publications on Jewish environmental ethics including [Uplifting People and Planet: 18 Essential Jewish Teachings on the Environment](#) and was a Dorot and PresenTense Fellow. He lives with his wife, Shana and their two children in Jerusalem.

## Table of Institutions Surveyed

<b>Name of Institution</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Approx. Number of Students</b>	<b>Year Founded</b>
The Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies	Jewish	Multi Denominational	Pierre Koenig St, Jerusalem	60	1972
Hebrew Union College	Jewish	Reform Judaism	King David St, Jerusalem	20 (in Rabbinical Program)	1963
Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies	Jewish	Conservative	Avraham Granot St, Jerusalem	30 (in Rabbinical Program)	1989
Midreshet Ein Hanatziv	Jewish	Orthodox - National Religious	Kibbutz Ein Hanatziv	80	1986
The Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem	Jewish	Conservative	Agron st, Jerusalem	30	1995
Yeshivat Ma'ale Gilboa	Jewish	Orthodox - National Religious	Kibbutz Ma'ale Gilboa	130	1993
Riets Yeshiva University	Jewish	Orthodox	Barukh Duvdevani st, Jerusalem	90	1977
Yeshivat Har Etzion	Jewish	Orthodox - National Religious	Alon Shvut, Gush Etzion	540	1968
Ohr Somayach Yeshiva	Jewish	Ultra-Orthodox	Shimon Hatzadik St, Jerusalem	400	1970
Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Seminary	Christian	Catholic	Beit Jala	100	1936



Report on Faith and Ecology Teaching in Holy Land Seminaries

Tantur Ecumenical Institute	Christian	Christian Ecumenical	HaRosmarin St, Jerusalem	Over 100 (includes short-term programs)	1972
Swedish Theological Institute	Christian	Protestant	Haneviim St, Jerusalem	Over 100 (includes short-term programs)	1951
Studium Theologicum Salesianum	Christian	Catholic	Shmuel Hanagid St, Jerusalem	50	2004
Domus Mamre	Christian	Catholic	Ras El' Amud, Jerusalem	20	2000
Domus Galilaeae	Christian	Catholic	Mount of Beatitudes, Galilee	40	2000
Christ Church	Christian	Anglican	Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem	Over 100 (includes short-term programs)	1849
Franciscan Seminary of the Holy land	Christian	Catholic	Custodia De Terra Santa, Jerusalem	35	No Data
Studium Biblicum Franciscanum	Christian	Catholic	Via Dolorosa St, Jerusalem	120	2001
Ecole Biblique et Archeologique Francaise	Christian	Catholic	Nablus Road St, Jerusalem	30	1890
Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem Seminary	Christian	Orthodox	Armenian Quarter, Jerusalem	40	1853

Al Qasemi Academy	Muslim		Baqa al-Gharbiyye	1600	1989
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## Appendix 1 – Faith and Ecology Course Descriptions or Syllabi at Holy Land Seminaries

### “Sustainable Communities” by Rabbi Tamir Nir

*This course was taught in Hebrew at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in 2012 and 2014.*

In the past few decades the world has seen huge changes, and we are hardly keeping up with the pace. Technology has blossomed, and there are new inventions and innovations. On the other hand the environmental crisis is an increasing problem; the extreme climate changes that effects us globally culturally and economically. The breaking up of families, the loss of communities and cultures, the lack of equality has only increased. These processes have led to the understanding that underneath it all is a social issue. That the individual can live his/her life as if he/she is the center and be unaware of the world and the people that surround him/her. "To work and protect" is open to the challenge to create a 'sustainable culture' that strives to create a balance with the person himself and his responsibility towards society and nature. The understanding of the relationship between human to human, and human to his/her surroundings through a life that is committed to preservation. A life that cares about the next day, and the next person. We are inviting you to the fascinating meeting of the holistic world view in relation to this question- how do you build and preserve the world, how do I balance my existential needs to the needs of the other, how to develop a sustainable culture?

### Jewish Ecology and Spiritual Sustainability, by Rabbi Yonatan Neril

*This course was taught in Hebrew at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in spring 2016, and a similar version was taught in 2011 and 2012 at the American Jewish University Israel campus.*

#### Introduction

The objectives of the course are to

- Explore teachings from the Jewish tradition on environmental sustainability and the spiritual roots of the environmental crisis;
- Connect those teachings to current ecological challenges in Jerusalem, Israel, and the world.

The course examines Biblical, Rabbinic, and modern Jewish teachings that relate to environmental awareness and issues. The course is divided into 13 units, with each session being 90 minutes.

Thirteen major topics in Jewish ecology are covered in the course: 1) Genesis, the Garden of Eden and a stewardship paradigm; 2) Noah and an Ethic of Environmental Sustainability 3) Water Use 4) Holy Use of the Material World, and Consumer Society 5) Energy Use 6) Trees 7) Shabbat 8) Shemita 9) Agriculture and globalized food production today 10) Bal Tashchit 11) 12) A Jewish Approach to Addressing Climate Change 13) Compassion to Animals/Tzar Ba'alei Chaim

Each of the units consist of two aspects: 1) a class on a particular Jewish environmental, involving learning in study-partners and as a class, guided by source sheets in English and Hebrew; 2) required reading. In addition, an experiential component, usually outdoors at nature or urban sites in Jerusalem, will be included as scheduling permits.

## **Course Outline**

### **Unit 1: Genesis: 'Conquer the Earth' and Stewardship in the Garden of Eden**

God commanded humanity to find a balance between serving, guarding and subduing nature; as part of an ethically responsible life.

Suggested Reading: [Essay by Dr. Jeremy Benstein on Genesis I and II](#)

### **Unit II: Noah and an Ethic of Environmental Sustainability**

Central theme: The ancient story of Noah and the flood relates to many ecological issues facing the modern world. For example, the preservation of our environment depends on individuals taking accountability for their deeds.

Suggested Reading: [Essays on Noah and Ecology](#)

### **Unit III: Water Use and Jewish Teachings**

Explore Jewish sources on water conservation in relation to contemporary water scarcity.

Suggested Reading: [Essays on Water and Jewish Teaching](#) and on [the Water Crisis in Israel and Globally](#)

### **Unit IV: Holy Use of the Material World, and Consumer Society**

Central theme: The challenge that wealth-driven over-consumption poses is of both a spiritual and physical nature. The spiritual challenge is to overcome wealth's pull towards self-gratification. The physical challenge manifests in environmental problems like species loss and pollution.

Suggested reading: [Essays on consumerism and Jewish teachings](#)

## **Unit V: Energy Use and Jewish Values**

The Jewish tradition contains a wealth of teachings for a path of prudent energy consumption, which can teach us to reduce our excessive fuel use.

Suggested Reading: [Energy and Torah Teachings](#)

## **Unit VI: The Trees Sang With Joy and the Future of the Rainforests**

Torah teachings relate to the importance of planting trees, protecting them, and using them responsibly.

Suggested reading: [Tu Bishvat booklet](#)

Experiential Component: In Gan Sacher or the Jerusalem forest, learn to relate to trees in a new way.

Participate in experiential activities with a partner guiding the participant to touch and identify a tree without looking at it - by sounds, sense of balance, smells, touch, and more. Outdoors, learn Jewish teachings about the importance of trees to humans, and about our dependence on trees in the modern world in light of deforestation.

## **Unit VII: The Sabbath and Ecology**

The Sabbath offers an opportunity to turn inward-- to family, community, and God. Without the distractions of day to day life, the Sabbath can rejuvenate people and the environment.

Suggested Reading: [Essays on Shabbat and Ecology](#)

## **Unit VIII: The Sabbatical Year**

Shemita offers the potential to make a fundamental correction for the Jewish people as a whole in the Land of Israel.

Suggested reading: [Essays on Shemita and Ecology](#)

## **Unit IX: Bal Tashchit: Do Not Destroy, and Food Waste in the Industrialized World**

The commandment not to waste (Bal Tashchit) applies to dress, energy, water, money, and every usable resource. One modern-day example- the throwing out of edible food – contains great relevance to our everyday lives.

Suggested Reading: [Essay on Bal Tashchit](#) by Y. Neril and these [Essays on Bal Tashchit](#)

## **Unit X: Israelite Agriculture and Globalized Food Production**

The Bible tradition's description of the food production of the Tribes of Israel reveals the importance of knowing and improving the increasingly complex journey of our own food.

Experiential Component: *The Machane Yehuda Market and the Globalization of Food* (rainy-day option)  
Explore Israel's largest market through the lens of modern environmental issues and Jewish teachings.

Suggested Reading: [Essays on Conscious Food Consumption and Jewish Teaching](#)

### **Unit XI: Biodiversity and Jewish teachings**

The Bible stresses the value of all of God's creatures, and from many passages we can learn the importance of species preservation and limitations on human exploitation of the world's ecosystems.

Suggested reading: [Essays on Jewish Views and Biodiversity](#)

Experiential Component: Jerusalem Bird Observatory. Participate in a tour and learn about Israel's winged migration, tour the brand new "living building" and learn sources about the place of bio-diversity in the Torah. Optional: volunteer to maintain this important urban nature zone.

Suggested Reading: [Essays on Jewish Teachings and Biodiversity](#)

### **Unit XII: A Jewish Approach to Addressing Climate Change**

Examine teachings from Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, Noah's ark, and the Book of Jonah and relate it to the ship Titanic and our current situation on planet earth. Suggested Reading: [Transcript of interview](#)

### **Unit XIII: Tzar Ba'alei Chaim and Compassion to Animals**

Look at Jewish teachings that relate to treating animals with respect, and relate it to industrial meat production. Suggested Reading: [Essays on Tzar Ba'alei Chaim](#) and these [Essays on Vegetarianism](#)

Optional additional Experiential Component: Path of the Springs (Shvil Hamayanot) (Four to six hours): We'll hike this popular trail (accessible by city bus from the center of town) enjoy a lunch by the springs, explore the natural springs. At the Sataf Spring Nature Reserve, enter a hewn-out water cistern and see first-hand age-old water collection methods and how they irrigate agricultural plots.

#### **Optional additional reading:**

Selected essays from [Eitz Chaim Hee: Weekly Environmental Commentaries on the Torah Portion](#), ed. Rabbi Yonatan Neril, Canfei Nesharim: Washington, D.C., 2008

Selected essays from [Uplifting People and Planet: 18 Essential Jewish Environmental Teachings](#), ed. Rabbi Yonatan Neril and Evonne Marzouk, Canfei Nesharim: Washington, D.C., 2011



