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Bal Tashchit : the Jewish prohibition against needless destruction

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Declarations

1. An important, and often overlooked aspect of *bal tashchit* is the protection of human life and health (pp.57, 66-67, 71, 115-116 of thesis). *Bal tashchit* also proscribes unnecessarily harming animal life (p.57-60 of thesis).
2. Unlike what David Nir claims, *bal tashchit* can be legitimately expressed as a general and wide-ranging principle (p.3 of thesis).
3. Approaching the 'Hebrew Bible' without the Jewish oral tradition, as codified in the Talmudic literature, leads to very different interpretations and conclusions about *bal tashchit* (p.7 of thesis).
4. *Bal tashchit* is a situation-dependent principle. In times of scarcity, *bal tashchit* is less relevant. In times of abundance, *bal tashchit* becomes more relevant.
5. *Bal tashchit* prohibits only the *needless* destruction of resources. This necessarily implies some form of a hierarchy or prioritization of human needs according to which any destruction can be gauged as needless or justified.
6. The principle of *bal tashchit* is based on a different set of underlying assumptions (Appendix A.) and a different system of thought (p.4-5 of thesis) than those which are prevalent in the modern western world, in spite of many similarities in approach (see chapter six, and chapter seven, p.195).
7. Jewish tradition is neither anthropocentric, nor ecocentric, but rather theocentric. Man is considered more important than nature because his role is to complete and perfect the creation (p.76 of thesis).
8. In this time of environmental interest, there should be more emphasis on the ecology-oriented writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888).
9. The environmental approach of the Netherlands is consistent with many of the ideas of the principle of *bal tashchit* as presented in this thesis.
10. The Ehrlich-Holdren equation of $I = P * A * T$ is seriously flawed, in that it does not sufficiently take into account the ability of humans to innovate and improve (Appendix C, p.224, 228-229 of thesis).
11. Halawi dates protect against arteriosclerosis better than the Medjool dates, though both are beneficial. Therefore, people should eat more dates. (M.Aviram *et al*(?), J Agricult Food Chem, *in press*).

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