



TAKE CARE

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Tikkun olam, repairing the world, is a fundamental Jewish value. Whether we pick up a piece of litter or offer a kind word to someone who's hurt, every one of us can help care for our planet and its inhabitants, every day.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Tikkun olam, Hebrew for “repairing the world,” is a fundamental Jewish value – not to mention a lifelong, intergenerational project. According to the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), God created the world in six days, but gave human beings the task of helping care for it. The world is a wondrous place, but it is also a work in progress; it is everyone’s job to pitch in and make it even better. As Rabbi Tarfon, a first-century sage, said, “It is not your responsibility to finish the work of perfecting the world, but you are not free to desist from it, either” (*Pirkei Avot* 2:21).

Repairing the world may feel like a very big job, but it can be tackled with many small acts. Famous 20th-century rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s message to young people was that “every little deed counts . . . every word has power.” Even little kids can take part in *tikkun olam*. Whether we pick up a piece of litter on the sidewalk, pause to make sure a turtle crosses the road safely, or offer a kind word to a new classmate, every one of us can help care for our planet and its inhabitants – all its bumbles and bees! – every day.