

Zionist-Eco Dilemma Cards

By Noam Dolgin

It is helpful to put each dilemma on a card.

Break the participants into groups of 3 and hand each group a card. They should:

- 1) Read and discuss the dilemma.
- 2) Figure out what ecological and Jewish issues are involved.
- 3) Come up with a solution, or choose an answer to the dilemma. (the group does not have to agree)
- 4) After 10 minutes have each group present their dilemma and explain their decisions.

Dilemma:

The Israeli Council on the Environment has published a report which sets a population limit for Israel; the number of people the land can support without losing critical wildlife habitat and irreparably damaging soil, water and air. Once the limit has been reached, (only two years away) only Jews fleeing persecution could apply for refugee status and make aliya. What is your opinion on the proposed limit?

Dilemma:

The Israel Defense Force, responding to sniper fire from Palestinian farmland that has killed or injured numerous passing Israeli motorists, has been systematically razing olive farms owned by Palestinians. You are aware these olives are the primary source of income for many Palestinian people, as well as primary habitat for many birds and rodents. As well, an injunction in the Torah forbids the cutting of fruit trees in a time of war. What is your opinion on these operations?

Dilemma:

The Ministry of Tourism and the City of Eilat, whose primary income is based on tourism, has begun an international advertising campaign to promote Scuba diving on the coral reefs in an attempt to double the current number of Scuba tourists. Eilat currently has the highest density of Scuba diving in the world, and under this pressure the reefs have begun to show major signs of degradation. You are aware that Coral reefs worldwide are highly endangered from over-fishing, development, over-diving and climate change, and that they are the second most diverse ecosystem on earth. How do you feel about this proposal?

An alternative group has proposed limiting the number of divers at a number considered sustainable, 1000 a day (1/5 of current levels.) How do you feel about this proposal?

Dilemma:

The Israeli government is currently constructing a security fence to separate the west bank from Israel in an attempt to stop the movement of terrorists from the West bank into Israel. In addition, the fence will stop the movement of all migratory and roaming land animals, including ibexes, gazelles, wolves, and more. This barrier could lead to decreased populations, and possibly extinction for these animals. What is your opinion on this fence.

Dilemma:

A survey was taken in Be'er Sheva, and found that 80% of residents enjoy going to forested national parks, while only 15% enjoy recreation in the open desert. The JNF has long been planting trees in desert climates, changing the ecosystem so as to be more "beautiful" and "fun" for Israeli recreation. How do you feel about the JNF afforestation activities? Should the JNF continue to plant forests as demanded by the public even in areas not naturally forested?

Dilemma:

JNF America is currently undertaking a major campaign to build more than 25 new settlements and move more than 250,000 people into the Negev over the next decade? You are aware that Israel is one of the most densely populated countries in the world (#40, 10 times more than the United States who is #172) and that the Negev is the last vestige of vast open space left in the country. Unfortunately, many of these people will continue to work in the center of the country, driving hours daily. Should the JNF continue this project of "making the deserts bloom?" What other options exist for Israel's demographic expansion.