

COMPASSIONATE TESHUVAH:

ACTION ITEMS FOR THE HIGH HOLIDAYS



There is but one *mitzvah*/commandment on Rosh HaShanah: to hear the sound of the shofar, that instrument of our emotional multitudes—the hyperventilating wailing of grief (Talmud Rosh HaShana 33b), the terror of Isaac and the pain of the ram slaughtered in his stead, the clarion alarm calling, “Sleepers! Awake from your sleep!” (Rambam, *Hilkhot* Teshuva 3:4). Just as it is ram that provides the horn for hearing these cries, today, it is through animals that we hear the cries of the oppressed most clearly. Widespread factory farming is not only ground zero for the wailing of abused animals, but of vulnerable human workers and our polluted, exploited ecosystems. This season of *teshuvah* (repentance/returning), let us hear the shofar and awaken to interrupt the cause of these cries.

HERE ARE

5 SIMPLE STEPS

TOWARD THIS KIND OF WAKEFULNESS:



1 Host a plant-based meal to celebrate the new year!

The bounty available to us in our creation narrative was in the Garden of Eden, where humans feasted on a diet of fruits, vegetables, and grains. What better way to celebrate Rosh HaShanah, the birthday of our world, than by preparing plant-based meals? Today, adopting more plant-based food practices can help preserve the planet we celebrate.

2 Bake or purchase delicious egg-free challah!

A simple switch to egg-free challah saves resources and prevents animal suffering. Many challah recipes—including the original recipe from Challah for Hunger—are already egg-free. And many traditional breads such as injera or dabo from Ethiopian communities, khubz ‘adi (Syrian flatbread), and pan de horiadaki (Greek country bread) are naturally plant-based!

3 Purchase higher welfare kosher meat from KOL Foods

Few options exist for kosher meat produced outside of factory farms. Make a more sustainable choice to source less and better kosher meat from KOL Foods, the only US kosher supplier that employs regenerative, 100% pastured farming practices for its chicken, lamb, and beef. You can place your order at: www.kolfoods.com

4 Reverse tashlich

Hold a “reverse tashlich” ritual, a project started by Tikkun HaYam (“repairing the sea”) initiative in Florida. Instead of symbolically tossing out the sins of humans into natural bodies of water, the initiative calls upon us to repair our desecration of the natural world in the form of waterfront clean-ups. Many have developed the practice of tossing bread into water for tashlich, which pollutes ecosystems and is unhealthy for animals like birds, so reverse tashlich also avoids causing problems for wildlife.

5 Compassionate heshbon nefesh and kapparot

Two traditions surrounding Yom Kippur—that of the “scapegoat” in biblical times and kapparot, still performed today—involve the symbolic transference of our sins onto animals (goats and chickens respectively). Today, we can perform *heshbon nefesh*, or an accounting of ourselves and our iniquities, among animals—in nature, or even with our pets!—who always lend us a nonjudgmental ear. It is always acceptable to perform kapparot with money (instead of live chickens), which can then be donated to help people and animals in need.