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ARK PROJECT

Service-Learning
with Animals

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with Animals

Workbook

The Ark Project: Service-Learning with Animals Workbook

Published by

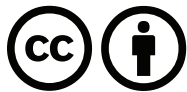
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About the Jewish Initiative for Animals

The Jewish Initiative for Animals (JIFA) provides new ways for the Jewish community to bring its values of compassion for animals into practice and strengthen Jewish communities in the process.

We pursue this work through:

- **Education:**

We collaborate with Jewish nonprofit organizations—camps, synagogues, youth groups, community centers, schools, college programs, and more—to produce educational resources that spark inquiry into how Jewish values should interact with how we treat animals. We’re already partnering with nearly 65 national and local Jewish organizations and we’re only getting started!

- **Ethical Food Policies:**

We empower Jewish institutions to create ethical food policies that allow them to live their values and lay the groundwork for future national campaigns.

- **Expert Consultation:**

We provide expert consultation to Jewish institutions that serve animal products to assist them in lowering meat consumption and finding higher-welfare sources. We’ll even help your Jewish institution set up new supply chains so that any animal products you serve truly represent your community’s values.

JIFA is a project of Farm Forward.

Letter from the Editors

Dear B'nai Mitzvah Students and Mentors,

Whether you're a b'nai mitzvah student, a parent, or a Jewish educator working with b'nai mitzvah students, this coming of age ceremony has the potential to bring incredible meaning into your Jewish life. For many students, the bar or bat mitzvah preparation might be the first opportunity outside of school to consider the kind of individual they want to be in the world now, and in the future. It's not about a day, but a person. This kind of transformation is amazing both to witness and experience.

For many students, taking action on behalf of animals is part of who you want to be now and in the future. This workbook was created for you to learn more about the issues that animals face in today's world and to understand how you can use your voice and actions to effect real, positive change. The Ark Project, which invokes the story of Noah in the Torah, provides a Jewish context for your connection with and desire to help animals.

Service-learning, the model we use in this workbook, creates an environment that values students and values the long-term impact of the work they do. The workbook will provide more information about the structure of this model to help students and the adults that support them create a service experience that has the biggest impact for the student AND for the animals involved. A key piece of service-learning is the opportunity for reflection. Reflection is what brings it all together. It's the place where we discover who we are and how we feel about things, based on what we've experienced. It's what supercharges our ability to take what we've learned and do something about it. In that space, we encourage students, and their adult mentors and facilitators, to engage deeply with their personal relationship with animals, their service experience, and their future as young Jewish adults.

We face real challenges in our pursuit to improve the lives of many, many animals, so it's important to remember to celebrate the victories that we witness and make possible. Students who care about animals—from their dog at home to the chickens on factory farms they may never see—are making real progress, every day, around the world. As you begin your project, remember: your service matters. You are bringing light and kindness into the lives of others. Enjoy the journey, and mazal tov!

Sincerely,

Melissa Hoffman


*Humane Education
and Program Specialist, JIFA*

Suzanne Feinspan

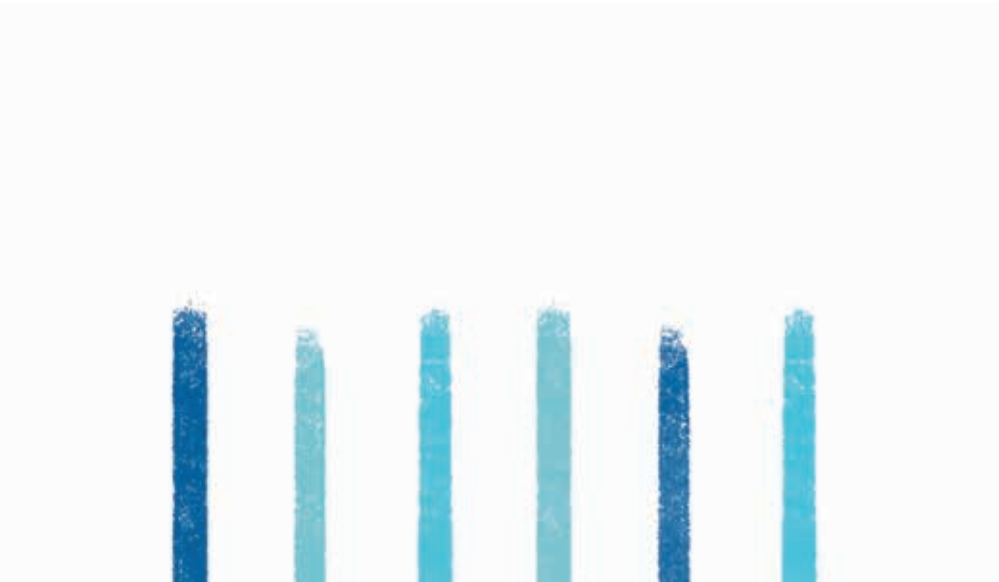
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Student Introduction

Do you care about animals? Are you looking for an idea for a mitzvah project for your bar or bat mitzvah that you'll love? If so, you've come to the right place! This workbook was created with YOU in mind.

Here you'll find everything you need to design a service-learning project focused on animals and their well-being that will be meaningful and exciting to you—and also the resources you need to make it happen.

How to Use this Workbook

This workbook will walk you through the process and provide you with the resources you need at each step.

Step 1: Pick someone to support you

This could be a parent, teacher, sibling, or Jewish educator—someone who will support you in creating and doing a project and who will challenge you to get as much as you can out of the experience. Once you've chosen this person, share and discuss together the Introduction for Adult Project Mentors section later in this workbook.

Step 2: Get to know service-learning

*This isn't your grandma's mitzvah project! How we think about serving others and connecting Jewishly in ethical ways has changed dramatically over the past 15 years. Read through *Understanding Service-Learning* [page 12] to understand what service-learning is, how's it's different from volunteering, and the different types of service you might choose to do.*

Step 3: Design your project

Creating a project that will be exciting and meaningful for you—and has a positive impact on animals - takes some thought. Use the worksheets in the following pages to help you walk through that process.

Step 4: Do your project

Once you know what type of project you want to do and through what organization—go for it! The workbook provides the materials you'll need to make those service opportunities into service-learning opportunities, including resources for learning about Jewish wisdom related to animals and broader animal welfare issues, as well as activities for reflecting during and after your service.

Here is our suggested Structure for each service-learning experience:

Each time you serve,

- *learn some Jewish perspectives using materials from the “Torah” chapter*
- *complete your service session, using the Avodah section as a resource*
- *engage in an activity from the “Reflection” chapter to bring it all together.*

Step 5: Share your project

Towards the end of the project, use the resources in Sharing Your Story and Educating Others [page 163] to figure out how you want to share your project and what you've learned with your friends, family and community. Consider how you might want to weave your learnings into your d'var torah, as well as your celebration.

Step 6: Figure out what comes next

Your service, learning, and commitment to animal welfare don't have to stop just because you've become a bar/bat mitzvah! Use the resources in our chapter on “What's Next?” [page 167] to figure out how you might continue to do service, advocacy, or education on your issue.



Understanding Service-Learning

Before we jump into planning your project, let's take a look at what service-learning is and why we do it...

What's the difference between volunteering (or service) and service-learning?

Volunteering or service is when you donate your time, energy, and skills in a way that benefits something outside yourself and your family. In the context of animals, volunteering may happen with individual animals, groups of animals or living communities as a whole. Examples of volunteering might include running a collection of pet food for animal shelters or a donation to food banks (for low-income families with companion animals (pets)). You might also organize a litter pick-up at your local park or beach to protect wildlife, or build enrichment tools (toys, housing, etc.) for farm animals living in community farms or sanctuaries.

Service-learning combines meaningful service (which might include volunteering) with learning and reflection, and utilizes the service as a tool to advance students' knowledge about a particular issue, explore their personal values and deepen their connection with one another, the animals whom they're serving, and their communities. Meaningful service includes identifying a genuine need, and then creating a project that responds to that need. In contrast to volunteerism, service-learning's objective is to benefit the service participants equally—both the providers (you) and recipients of the service benefit from the project. In a Jewish context, service-learning also seeks to draw connections between the volunteering that is being done and Jewish wisdom, in order to help participants identify ways that their service might enrich their understanding of Judaism and their own Jewish identity.

In short, Jewish service-learning, especially this workbook, seeks to support students in finding a project that matches their passions, addresses a need, and connects Jewish values to service in a way that adds value to the experience.

Why do service-learning as part of the b'nai mitzvah experience?

The b'nai mitzvah process and ceremony marks the coming of age of young people in the Jewish community. Doing service as part of the b'nai mitzvah experience is an opportunity to consider our responsibilities to our community and the world around us and how we want to pursue those responsibilities as adult Jews.

As someone who is passionate about animals, you may already feel, instinctively, that we should treat them with respect, reverence, and responsibility. As sentient beings who share our world, they also benefit from human acts of loving kindness. The concept of preventing unnecessary harm to animals and treating them with compassion, or tza'ar ba'alei chayim, is actually a law of Torah rooted deeply in Jewish values and tradition. You'll get to explore perspectives on this value—and ways you can apply it in your project and beyond—as part of this workbook.





Types of Service

The term “service” can encompass several different types of work—all with different goals.

Direct Service

Direct service is any activity that aims to address an immediate social issue through provision of support and services. Some examples of direct service include serving meals at a soup kitchen or helping to weed a community garden which provides food to the homeless. The key is working directly with the individuals who benefit. Direct service with animals might include cleaning enclosures, walking dogs, and brushing cats at an animal shelter, or helping with feeding and laundry at a wildlife rehab facility.

Indirect Service

Indirect service benefits an organization and the community through service that can take place outside the organization’s main operations. These services can often be done at home or other location, but you will choose with the partner organization. Examples include building a webpage, or filming a promotional video to help drive attention and support. Indirect service could also include education and awareness building, explained in more detail below.

Education and Awareness Building

Education and awareness building seek to educate the public about a social issue that they may be unaware of—motivating them to act on it. In many cases with animals, abuses or suffering may be purposely hidden from public view (as with factory farming) or may simply occur outside the scope of our daily experience (animals living in shelters, animals in the wild, and animals in entertainment and captivity). Raising awareness may include organizing movie screenings or lectures, creating posters or art shows and more.

Research

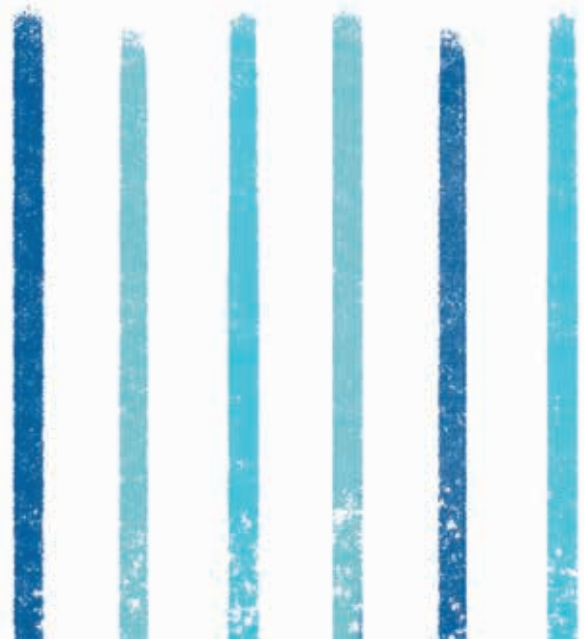
Conducting research is another way to engage in a local issue concerning animals. This might include administering surveys or interviews to determine public thought on an issue, or doing scientific research about animals themselves as a contribution to an existing project. For example, as a combination research-awareness building project, students could help an animal rehab look at past cases in an effort to better educate the public about how to identify, handle, and transport injured or sick animals in their area.

Organizing and Advocacy

Organizing and advocacy aim to change the underlying system of laws and policies that may be leading to or perpetuating a social issue. Organizing usually involves mobilizing groups of people to take an action that puts pressure on government, a company or other institution (like a school, camp, or synagogue) to make them change the way they are doing things. Advocacy may include writing a letter to a Member of Congress, collecting signatures for a petition, or meeting with one's local city council to share your perspective on an issue. For example, students might collect signatures to petition their local supermarket to carry higher welfare eggs, dairy, and meat.

Philanthropy and Fundraising

Nearly all organizations that work to address social issues, including nonprofit animal care and welfare organizations, require funding to do their work. Therefore, one way to serve those organizations is by donating money to them or raising money from others for them. While typically not considered a part of community service or service-learning, you might consider giving a percentage of the money you receive from your bar/bat mitzvah to an organization you care about, hosting a dance-a-thon to raise money for such an organization, or writing letters or making calls to friends and family asking them to donate to a particular animal welfare cause.



Three Steps of a Successful Service-Learning Project

Successful service-learning projects have 3 key components which can be summed up as: Torah, Avodah, and Reflection.

The workbook is laid out in a way to easily engage in each of these steps throughout your project.

1. TORAH: Understanding Jewish Wisdom on the Issue

While the act of service is, in itself, meaningful, we increase its meaning when we use it as an opportunity to learn more about our world and about Jewish tradition. Once you have chosen your project, you can do some research about the broader issue related to the service you'll be doing—a process which the section on designing your project will guide you through. The Torah section of the workbook will help you to explore Jewish voices throughout history and what they have had to say about the human-animal relationship and bond and animal welfare. You could engage in this exploration by studying ancient, medieval, or modern Jewish texts on the issue, participating in or creating a ritual related to the issue, identifying a Jewish leader engaged in the issue and speaking with them, or exploring primary sources like newspaper clippings, photographs, or videos about Jewish engagement on the topic.

Engaging in this exploration will help you to determine how your service on this issue might help you connect with being Jewish in a different way.

2. AVODAH: Engaging in Service

The act of engaging in service—of working for the good of animals on a task that needs to be done—can be a powerful learning tool. Pay attention to what comes up for you as you do your service. How do you feel? What do you see, hear, or smell? What surprises you? What do you learn? You can also use your time doing service as an opportunity to learn more about the animals, people, and organization you're working with.

3. REFLECTION: Processing the Experience and Thinking about What's Next

Reflection allows us an opportunity to think about how an act of service affected us, what we learned and what we might want to do similarly or differently in the future. It allows us to identify questions we might have or challenges we face and wrestle with them in an effort to find answers. Reflection also gives us a chance to think about how we might want to integrate anything we learned into our lives beyond the service experience. If you're engaging in an ongoing service opportunity, you can set aside 5-10 minutes after each experience, even on the ride or walk home, to reflect on the experience and what you learned.

Once your project is complete or nearing completion, you can use the materials in the workbook to reflect on the experience as a whole and to consider how you might want to continue to engage in this issue beyond the completion of your service-learning project.



Sample 360 Roadmap

Below is a sample of how you could design a 'roadmap' to flow between each of these three areas during a project. Ideally, your sessions are long enough (a couple or more hours) and your project spans enough time (a couple or more months) for you and those you're serving to get the most benefit possible.

Sample Project: Extreme Makeover - Shelter Edition

After learning about the broader issue of pet overpopulation, a student finds a local shelter that is interested in revamping its image to make it more inviting to potential adopters. The shelter and student decide on a specific project to help execute the overall makeover. In 2-3 hour blocks, the student does 6 service sessions at the shelter over the course of 3 months.



START
Pre-project Learning and Design

Sample Session #1:

<p>TORAH (pre-service) <i>Personal Relationship to Animals</i> (pg 32)</p>	<p>AVODAH (service) 1. Read through Avodah section (pg 141) 2. Do service</p>	<p>REFLECTION ACTIVITY (post-service) <i>Free Writing or Drawing</i> (pg 150)</p>
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Sample Session #2:

<p>TORAH (pre-service) <i>Animals as Part of Creation</i> (pg 43)</p>	<p>AVODAH (service) 1. Refer back to Avodah section as needed (pg 141) 2. Do service</p>	<p>REFLECTION ACTIVITY (post-service) <i>Storytelling to Family Member</i> (pg 151)</p>
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Sample Session #3:

<p>TORAH (pre-service) <i>Caring for Your Animals</i> (pg 51)</p>	<p>AVODAH (service) 1. Refer back to Avodah section as needed (pg 141) 2. Do service</p>	<p>REFLECTION ACTIVITY (post-service) <i>Social Media Post</i> (pg 150)</p>
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Sample Session #4:

<p>TORAH (pre-service) <i>Preventing Cruelty to Animals</i> (pg 61)</p>	<p>AVODAH (service) 1. Refer back to Avodah section as needed (pg 141) 2. Do service</p>	<p>REFLECTION ACTIVITY (post-service) <i>Triangle - Square - Circle</i> (pg 150)</p>
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Sample Session #5:

<p>TORAH (pre-service) <i>Animals and Spirituality</i> (pg 129)</p>	<p>AVODAH (service) 1. Refer back to Avodah section as needed (pg 141) 2. Do service</p>	<p>REFLECTION ACTIVITY (post-service) <i>What, So What, Now What</i> (pg 152)</p>
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FINISH
Post-project Sharing and What's Next

Guidelines for Designing Your Project

It is not your duty to complete the work. Neither are you free to desist from it.

(Rabbi Tarfon in Pirkei Avot 2:16)

לא עליך המלאכה לגמור,
ולא אתה בן חורין לבטל
ממנה.

*Lo alecha hamlacha ligmor;
v'lo ata ben chorin libateil mimena.*

You're about to embark on an adventure where you're devoting a serious number of hours to a project, so you want to make sure that it's one you're excited about, right?

Follow the step-by-step process to help you identify a project that you'll love!



Identifying a Need: The Issues

Judaism mandates us to protect animals from unnecessary harm. As you'll learn in the Torah section later in this workbook, there are a lengthy collection of texts and opinions about how our ancestors and founding rabbis put these instructions into practice. Today, we face a number of complex issues that put animals' welfare at stake.

How can we identify them and respond?

Jewish Animal Ethics and Animal Welfare

The following is adapted from the Hazon Food Guide (2016):

Nonhuman animals are a vital part of our ecosystems and communities, and they awaken in us a wonder at the world around us. Like us, they feel pleasure and pain, joy and emotional distress. As Jews, we've inherited a tradition that has numerous beautiful insights about animal life and, from the time of the ancient rabbis, Jewish law has offered detailed advice on how to treat animals ethically based on the Jewish principle of compassion for animals, tza'ar ba'alei chayim.

צֵעַר בַּעֲלֵי חַיִּים

Tza'ar ba'alei chayim

- 1. literally: the suffering of living creatures*
- 2. the Jewish moral principle and legal ban on inflicting undue harm on animals, either physically or emotionally.*

What is “welfare”?

Minimally, animal welfare requires maintaining appropriate standards for accommodation, feeding, disease prevention and treatment, freedom of movement, and the ability to express natural behaviors. As Jews, the Torah mitzvah and moral imperative of tza'ar ba'alei chayim calls upon us to provide animals with thoughtful care and protection that attends to both their physical and mental well-being. This can apply on the level of the individual, or on the level of whole groups or species.

Choosing an Issue

There's no shortage of issues affecting animals, and here are just some examples of topics you might consider learning about as you begin to design your project:

- *Pet overpopulation*
- *Endangered species*
- *Factory farming*
- *Companion animal (pet) welfare*
- *Urban wildlife*
- *Animal testing*
- *Illegal pet trade*
- *Captive animals*
- *Habitat destruction*
- *Animals in entertainment (circuses, movies, marine parks, etc)*

In many cases, issues that we typically think of as affecting humans (like poverty and homelessness) also affect animals (like companions of impoverished and homeless people). The same goes for issues like pollution and littering, which creates an uninhabitable, dangerous environment for humans and nonhumans alike. As for our food system, injustices committed towards farm workers often occur in the same places that mistreat farm animals.

In the appendix, we've included a list of sample topics and subtopics that you can explore more in depth as you plan.

In researching an issue and identifying a need in your community, we recommend the following:

Engage in a process that involves:

1. Assembling facts
2. Forming your opinions
3. Identifying a need

You'll want to do some digging on an issue you're passionate about. Who (which animal/s) is affected? What are the causes of the issue? Who (which people or organization/s) is already active on the issue? Next, you may solidify your own viewpoint and how you feel about the issue. Finally, what work is still needed on this issue? What is possible in your own community? Answering these questions will help you decide on a project and take action.

Considerations for researching an issue:

1. Where can I make the greatest impact?

How can you help animals the most? You see, know, and hear about injustices committed towards animals and want to make a difference. It's best to plan your project intentionally around the most good you can do with the time and resources available to you.

2. What protections exist?

If you're researching an issue, you may be interested in learning about the legal protections that exist for animals on the federal and state levels. How much protection do animals get under these laws? Depending on your topic, you might even be able to find city laws that are regulated on a local level in your area.

3. Who are the stakeholders?

Stakeholders include a person, group, or organization that has interest or concern in an issue. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the actions, objectives, and policies that exist around the issue—although they can't necessarily be involved in making decisions, animals are also unspoken stakeholders

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

4. Where can I learn more?

In the appendix you'll find a few sample topics that might help you uncover the need for a project in your community. You can also research a topic that isn't listed there. For further information about different animal issues, check out our list of Suggested Resources (also in the appendix).

Use the worksheet on the following page to log the information you gathered and reflected on for your topic/issue:



Reflection Log on an Issue:

I learned about this community/global issue:

This issue affects (check all that apply):

- animals*
- people*
- environment*
(air, water, soil, etc...)

I learned these things about how this issue impacts my community:

What is the need for my service effort?

What contribution can I make?

*Adapted from Itle-Clark, S. (2016). *Service-learning reflective log. Empowering Youth Through Service-Learning*. Retrieved from Humane Society Academy

In addition to educating yourself on the issues that exist as you try to identify the issue you want to work on, you'll also want to reflect on your own passions, skills and logistical needs.

Write down your answers to the following questions and then discuss them with a parent, educator, or mentor to help bring your ideas into focus:

Personal Reflection: Passion, Skills, and Logistics

Passion

What do you value about animals? What values play a part in your relationship to animals?

What kinds of things do you love to do?

Based on the research you did above, which animal welfare issue(s) make you most sad or angry? Which make you most excited or motivated?

Are you most passionate about:

- Working directly in the service of animals?
- Educating others about animal welfare issues?
- Trying to change laws regarding the treatment or protection of animals?
- Another issue that helps animals?

Skills

What kinds of skills do you have that might be useful in these types of service projects?

What kinds of skills are you interested in learning throughout the project?

Logistics

What is logistically feasible for my family? How often would I volunteer? How far am I able to travel for a project? You will want to talk with your parent/guardian/adult mentor to see what is possible with both your schedules.

Choosing an Organization

Once you're clear on the issue you want to work on, you'll have to identify an organization through which you can do that work. You'll want to work with an adult to research a few things as you consider organizations. You can use this worksheet to help you with that research.

Name of Organization: _____

Website: _____

Main Contact (write down the name and email/phone of your main contact person at the org once you have one):

Name: _____

Email/Phone: _____

What issue are they addressing?

What kind of public support do they need?

What impact would your project have on the organization? On animals?

To determine whether an organization is reputable and capable of carrying out its mission to help animals, we recommend asking:

Does the organization have 501(c)3 status as a non-profit? This means that it is government-approved as a charitable organization.

Yes

No

How long has the organization been in business? Length of time in business doesn't ensure credibility, but it can help.

0-1 year

1-3 years

4-10 years

More than 10 years

More than 20 years

Does the organization have a board that governs its activities?

Yes

No

What are the organization's strategies for making animal lives better?

How are monetary donations spent?

Finally, you'll want to visit the organization and determine whether it provides optimal conditions for animals (if animals live on site) and seems well-run. If you decide to do a project with a national organization and cannot visit the headquarters or local office, schedule a phone or video call with a staff member who can help you.

A note about zoos and other common sites of animal use and entertainment:

With possible exceptions, JIFA does not recommend using this resource to do service-learning with organizations that intentionally breed and use animals for human benefit and entertainment (zoos, aquaria, animal-assisted therapy or service organizations, animal entertainment groups, and some farms and sanctuaries). If you are not sure whether an organization is suitable for your project, JIFA is available to help you determine if it's a good match.



A note about working with an organization that houses live animals:

Many organizations do not have the same rules for younger volunteers as they do for older teenage and adult volunteers. Some may not allow any people under a certain age to volunteer on site, while others may allow someone your age to work around the animals, but not in direct contact with them for safety reasons. Many organizations, however, have youth programs where students can volunteer with animals in supervised groups, with a parent/guardian chaperone, or can perform specific tasks approved by the organization off-site under the staff supervision. Before you commit to working with an organization, make sure you know the kinds of tasks and support you'll be asked to do so that you're both comfortable with and excited about your project going in.

Confirming Your Project

Once you're clear on what you want to do and who you want to do it through, fill out this worksheet to record your plan:

I plan to work on _____ through the organization

This project is meaningful to me because...

My goals for this project are...

The adult(s) who will support me in doing this project are...

I will be doing my project from _____, 20__ through _____, 20__.



Torah: Understanding Jewish Wisdom on the Issue

As we discussed earlier, each day you do service should include the following three parts: *Torah, Avodah, and Reflection*.

This section provides the materials for the following part of that process:

Torah (pre-service)	Avodah (service)	Reflection (post-service)
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Introduction

One of the key things that differentiates service-learning from volunteering is the focus on exploring the broader social issues that are being addressed in the service so as to develop a deeper understanding of them, as we explored in the previous section. In Jewish service-learning, we build on that by also learning about the wisdom that Jewish tradition has to share about a particular issue and how learning about and working on that issue might strengthen our connection to ourselves as Jews. In the following sections, you'll find a variety of resources to support you in Jewish exploration related to animal welfare.

How to Use This Section

1. On your first service day, choose one activity from the *Personal Relationship to Animals* section to do.
2. For each following service experience, choose one activity from the remaining sections to explore before you serve.

Personal Relationship to Animals

Introduction

What comes to mind when you think of animals? Companionship? Nature? Farms? Perhaps a movie or book that told a story about animals? Where do you encounter animals the most, and which experience has impacted you the most? Have you ever thought about how animals see the world through their eyes, and experience joy and pain in life? Have you empathized with them and felt responsible for them?

The three activities below explore our personal relationship to animals. Choose one to engage in before your first service experiences.





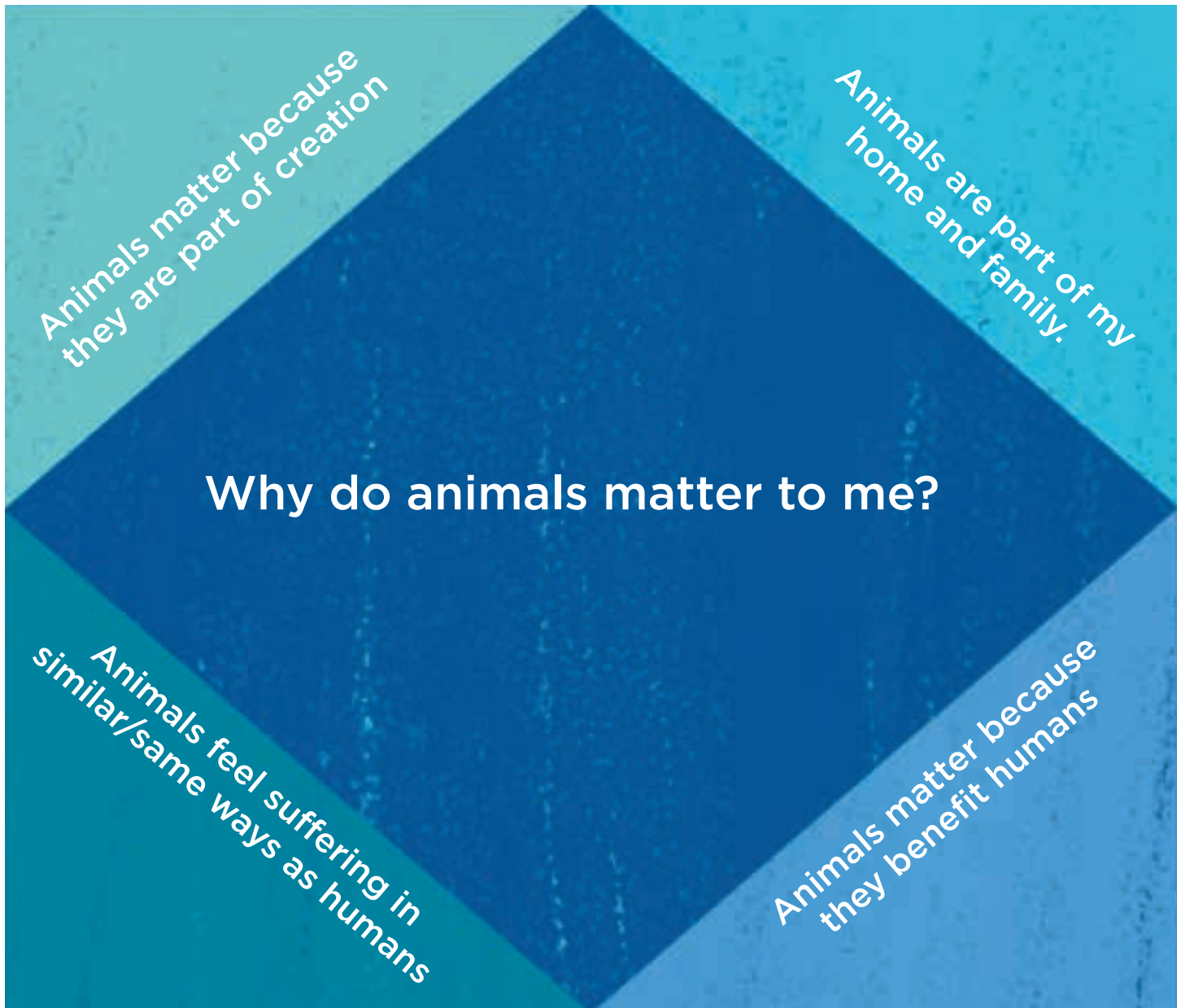
Activity 2: Pick a Corner

Below are descriptions of several different ways of thinking about our personal relationship with animals to help you reflect on your own feelings and beliefs.

For each, there is a box that has a question about animals in the middle. In each case, circle the answer in the corner that is closest to what you believe. If none of them is close, write your own answer.

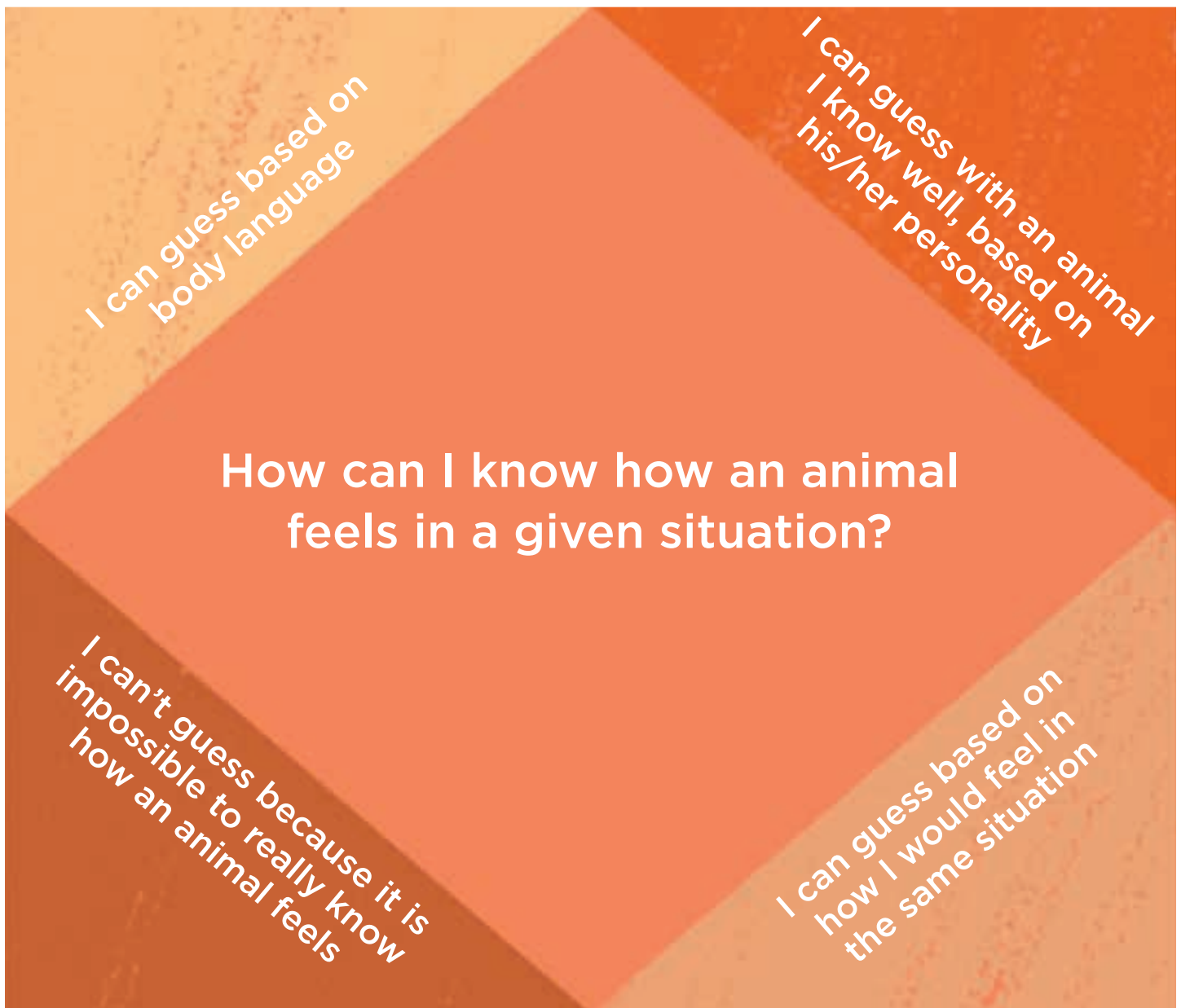
Animals in Our Lives

How do you relate to animals? Since you've chosen to center your service-learning around a cause that helps them, it's likely you have been touched or moved by animals at some point in your life. Perhaps you've had a special companion animal in your life at home, or you've had a meaningful experience with animals in another environment—in nature, at a shelter or sanctuary, or at a farm.



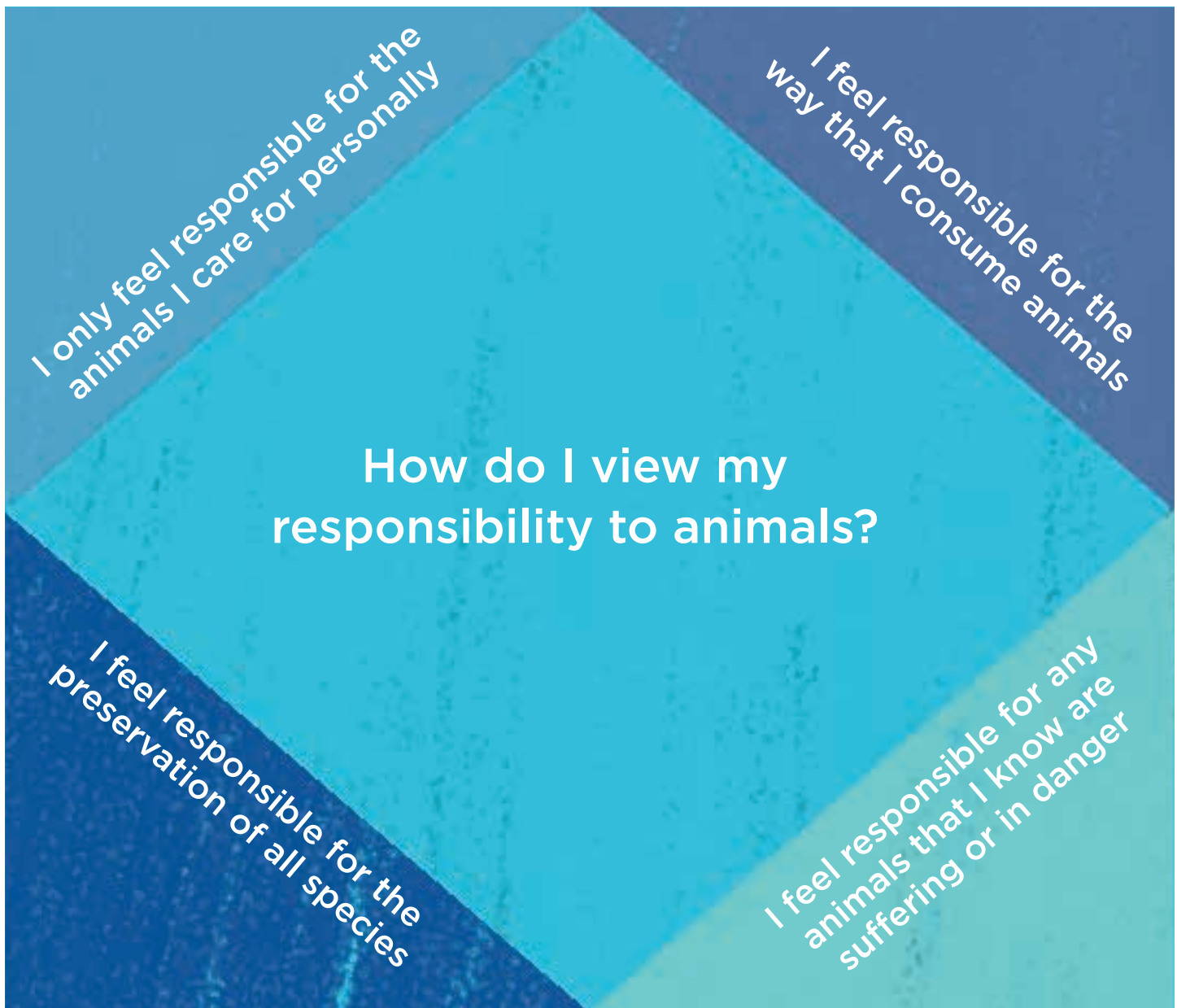
Animal Emotions

Nonhuman animals are sentient, meaning they can feel, perceive, and be conscious in ways similar or identical to us—let's not forget we are animals, too! This might seem obvious to you if you've ever had a companion animal or spent long periods of time with an individual animal. However, many people throughout history actually tried to argue that animals couldn't feel pain or suffering to justify treating them badly. Jeremy Bentham, an English moral philosopher born in the mid-18th century who rejected that view, famously said about animals: "the question is not, can they reason? nor, can they talk? but, can they suffer?" Today, because of a growing field of animal sciences, we know that animals from a wide variety of species (mammals, birds, fish, even creatures like the octopus!) experience not only physical feelings, like pain, but emotions ranging from joy to sadness, grief, jealousy, and post-traumatic stress.



Responsibility to Animals

You may have already thought a lot about how your relationship to animals influences your feelings of responsibility towards them. Maybe you are just starting to think about how your relationship with one animal (or experience with an animal) helps you think about your relationship and responsibility to others. Whether we think about it regularly or not, most of our choices in life affect animals in some way—everything from our decisions about food and dealing with waste to our choices about cleaning products and where we get our entertainment. In some cases, we might think about the suffering of individual animals in the care of humans, or we might worry about and feel responsible for the survival of a whole species.



Activity 3:

Journey-Mapping

Our relationship with animals, and how we think about that relationship as Jews, develops over time. Consider these questions about your relationship with animals and how it's changed over time:

- *Does your family have a relationship with animals? What is that like? Has it changed over your lifetime?*
- *Are there events related to animals from your life that were particularly meaningful or impactful?*
- *Have you had moments where you were less connected to or concerned with animals?*
- *Have you ever done any service work or other work to support animals?*
- *Are there people who have influenced how you think about animals?*
- *Are there ways that your Jewish life has influenced your relationship with animals?*

Using a river as a metaphor for the journey, take 10 minutes to draw a picture on the next page that represents the journey of your relationship with animals.

- *What is the source of that river?*
- *What course has the river taken?*
- *What were the tributaries, the turns it took and followed, and the turns it took and then went in another direction?*
- *The rocky patches?*
- *Where was there smooth sailing?*

Once you've completed your picture, share it with a family member or mentor and describe your journey to them.





My Journey of Caring for Animals



Conclusion

As you move through your project and your service-learning experience, you may find your relationship to animals change and grow. Your concern for and feelings of responsibility towards animals may expand and deepen in ways that change you, change the way you see animals, and change the choices you make in your life going forward.

We can draw upon much of the wisdom in our tradition to support our work and choices to protect animals. In the next sections, you'll explore Judaism's rich and complex set of laws and views on animals, which provide a framework for us to think about our relationship with them today.





Animals as Part of Creation

Introduction

B'reishit, "in the beginning," humans were created alongside many other living, breathing, feeling beings. Perhaps the most fascinating discussion and set of Torah commentaries are the ones that surround our origin story—for many years, these discussions and debates have tried to define our relationship to animals. Science and religion function differently in our lives today, so even if you don't take the text literally, the creation story is an important, multi-faceted perspective on how humans share the world with and relate to nonhuman animals.

The two activities below explore the topic of animals as part of creation. Regardless of the focus of your service project, an activity from this section would be a good one to include at some point.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
רֶמֶשׁ	<i>remes</i>	creeping
מַעֲשֵׂה	<i>ma'asecha</i>	our works/creation
חַיָּה	<i>chayah</i>	wild animal

Activity 1: Living Talmud

Jewish tradition has a lot to say about animals and their role as part of creation. The “Living Talmud” on the next page provides a few of those perspectives for you to explore. The Talmud is a recording of the Oral Law created by the ancient rabbis, based on the Torah.

Once you have explored some of the texts on the Living Talmud page, discuss them with a family member or mentor using the questions below or use the space below to answer the questions on your own.

Questions

What similarities do you see between the various texts? Do any themes emerge?

How are these texts different? How might they contradict one another?

Share one text you particularly connected with or like. What speaks to you about it?

What does it mean for us today that animals can be seen as having an equal part in creation to humans? How might this affect our behavior?



אָבֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא,
בְּשֵׁם שְׂרַחֲמֵיּוֹ עַל הָאָדָם,
כִּדְ רַחֲמֵיּוֹ עַל הַבְּהֵמָה,
שְׂנֵאָמֵר: (תהילים פרק קמה ט)
”וְרַחֲמֵיּוֹ, עַל-כָּל-מַעֲשָׂיו.”
—מדרש תנחומא נח ו'

Just as the Holy Blessed One's compassion is on human beings, is the Holy Blessed One's compassion on animals, as it is written, "God's mercies are upon all God's works." (Psalm 145:9)

—Midrash Tanchuma Noach 6

Praise YHVH (Hashem), wildlife and all animals, creeping things, and birds of wing... Let them praise the name YHVH.

—Psalms 148

הִלְלוּ אֶת-ה' מִיָּה וְכָל-
בְּהֵמָה; רֶמֶשׂ, וְצִפּוֹר כָּנָף
יִהְלְלוּ, אֶת-שֵׁם ה'.

Living Talmud: Animals as Part of Creation

So many are Your works, YHVH (Hashem); You have made them all with wisdom; The land is full of your riches.

—Psalm 104:24

מְהֵרָבּוֹ מַעֲשָׂיָךְ, ה'—
כָּלֶם, בְּחִכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ;
מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ, קִנְיָנֶךָ.

It should not be believed that all beings exist for the sake of humanity's existence ... [rather,] all the other beings, too, have been intended for their own sakes...

—Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed III:13; 12th Century, Egypt

אֶפְלוּ דְבָרִים שְׂאֵתָהּ רוֹאֵה אוֹתָן
 שֶׁהֵן יִתְיָרָה בְּעוֹלָם כְּגוֹן זְבוּבִין
 וּפְרָעוֹשִׁין וְיִתּוֹשִׁין אִף הֵם בְּכָל
 בְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם הֵן, וּבְכָל הַקְּדוּשָׁה
 בְּרַךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלִיחוֹתוֹ:
 אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי נֶחֶשׁ,
 אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי יִתּוֹשׁ,
 אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי צְפַרְדֵּעַ.
 –מדרש בראשית רבה יז:

Even things that you may regard as superfluous to the world, such as fleas, gnats and flies, even they are included in the creation of the world and the Holy Blessed One carries out the Divine purpose through everything – even a snake, a scorpion, a gnat, or a frog.

—Midrash, Genesis Rabbah 10:7

What makes you superior to a worm? The worm serves the Creator with all its mind and strength! Human, too, is a worm and maggot, as it is written “I am a worm and no man.” (Psalms 22:7) If God had not given you intelligence you would not be able to worship God but like a worm. Thus you are no better than a worm, and certainly [no better] than [other] people. Bear in mind that you, the worm and all other small creatures are considered as equals in the world. For all were created and have but the ability given to them by the blessed Creator. Always keep this matter in mind.

—Baal Shem Tov, Rabbi Yisroel (Israel) ben Eliezer, Tzava’as HaRiVaSH #12, 18th century Jewish mystic, Poland

Furthermore, one’s compassion should extend to all creatures, and he should neither despise nor destroy them, for the chochmah Above (Supernal Wisdom) extends to all of creation—inanimate objects, plants, animals, and speaking (humans).

—Rabbi Moshe Cordovero in Tomer Devorah (p. 74-75, translated by R. Moshe Miller) 16th Century Mystical Thinker, Safed, Israel

Activity 2:

Journaling

In *Genesis Rabbah*, a collection of midrashim (interpretations of text done by the ancient rabbis to “fill in the gaps”), it says:

Even things that you may regard as superfluous to the world, such as fleas, gnats and flies, even they are included in the creation of the world and the Holy Blessed One carries out the Divine purpose through everything - even a snake, a scorpion, a gnat, or a frog.
—Midrash Rabbah Genesis 10:7

אֶפְלוּ דְבָרִים שְׂאֵתָהּ רוּאָה אוֹתָן
שֶׁהֵן יִתְיָרָה בְּעוֹלָם כְּגוֹן זְבוּבִין
וּפְרָעוֹשִׁין וַיִּתְּוֹשִׁין אֲף הֵם בְּכֻלָּל
בְּרִייתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם הֵן, וּבְכֹל הַקְּדוֹשׁ
בְּרַךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלִיחוֹתוֹ:
אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי נְחָשׁ,
אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי יִתוּשׁ,
אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי צְפַרְדֵּעַ.

Take some time to journal about what this passage might mean for you. Use the following questions as prompts:

- *If God carries out the Divine purpose through all living things, what does that mean about how we should treat all living things?*
- *Do you believe that a mosquito should be treated with the same compassion as a dog? Should a dog be treated with the same compassion as a human? Why or why not?*
- *What does this passage mean about how we should treat living things—animals and humans—who we dislike, disagree with or find uncomfortable to be around?*
- *What else do you notice about this text? How else might it impact your relationship with animals and all living things?*

Conclusion

Exploring Jewish perspectives on animals' roles as part of creation is just one way to understand more about Jewish texts that can inform our relationship to and compassion for animals. The following sections explore a variety of other perspectives on these questions as well.





Caring for Your Animals

Introduction

This section explores what Jewish tradition has to say about how we can most compassionately care for our animals. Even though this isn't a comprehensive list of rules, stories, or opinions, see what you can gather from the messages they send about human-animal relationships. How might we apply these lessons today? Regardless of the focus of your service project, an activity from this section would be a good one to include at some point.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
בְּהֵמָה	<i>behemah</i>	domesticated animal
צָמָא	<i>tzamei</i>	thirsty
רַחֲמִים	<i>rachamim</i>	compassion, mercy
רוֹעֵה	<i>ro'eh</i>	shepherd



Activity 1:

Creating Your Own Talmud

The Talmud (a recording of the Oral Law created by the ancient rabbis, based on the Torah) is structured such that the middle of each page has a small section of an earlier text, the Mishnah, in the middle with commentary about that text, written by different rabbis, all around it. In this activity, you're going to create your own page of Talmud.

On the next page, you'll find a worksheet with a text in the middle of it which focuses on how we should care for animals. Read through the text a few times. Following the worksheet, write an opinion of that main text above the text in the box labeled "Opinion 1." You can imagine viewing the text from different perspectives, like from that of the human caregiver, or the non-human animal. What would an opposing opinion say? Include an additional opinion to the left of the main text in the box labeled "Opinion 2," and then write a conclusion that reflects your agreement with one opinion or another in the box labeled "Conclusion." Finally, write out an example of how you might apply your understanding of this text today in the box labeled "Modern Application."

Some questions you might want to address in your opinion sections are:

- *Whose needs are seen as being more important in the text—the human or animal? Do you agree or disagree with their prioritization?*
- *What questions does this text raise for you?*
- *What piece of this text requires explanation, in your opinion? How would you explain it?*
- *What is missing from this perspective on how to care for animals?*

Opinion 1:

Opinion 2:

מאכל לבהמתו שנא
(דברים יא, טו) "וְנָתַתִּי עֵשָׂב
בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבִהֶמְתֶּךָ וְאָכְלָתָּ
וְשָׂבַעְתָּ:"

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: A person should not eat or drink before first providing for his animals since it says, "And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and then, thou shalt eat and be satisfied." (Deuteronomy 11:15)

*—Babylonian Talmud,
Tractate Berachot 40a*

Conclusion

Modern Application:

Activity 2:

Animal Care Guides

Jewish texts provide us with a variety of suggestions of how we should best nurture the animals in our care.

Using the texts below, create a set of A) written instructions and/or B) visual instructions for an ancient farmer on how they should care for their animals using the worksheets on the next pages.

The seventh day is a Shabbat for YHVH (Hashem) your god: You shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your animal (behemah), or the foreigner within your domain.

—Exodus 20:10

וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא-
תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ-וּבִתְךָ
עַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וּבְהֵמָתְךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר
בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: A person should not eat or drink before first providing for his animals since it says, "And I will give grass in your fields for your animal (behemah), and then you shall eat and be satiated" (Deuteronomy 11:15).

—Babylonian Talmud,
Tractate Berachot 40a

דָּאמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב אֲסוּר לְאָדָם
שִׂיאֲכַל קוּדֵם שִׂיתֵן מֵאֲכַל לְבֵהֵמָתוֹ שְׂנָא
(דְּבָרִים י"א, טו) וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשַׂדְּךָ לְבֵהֵמָתְךָ
וְאָכְלָתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ:

The holy Arizal (Rabbi Yitschak Luria of blessed memory) once mentioned to one of his students that he had a "mark" on his face as a result of the sin of causing pain to animals. Upon investigating, this Torah scholar found out that instead of feeding their chickens in the morning, his wife would let them forage for their own food. When he corrected this, the Arizal remarked that the mark on his forehead was gone.

—Rabbi Elazar ben Moshe Azikri,
Sefer Chareidim 14:1

ומעשה היה בדורנו שהרב המקובל הגדול כמהר"ר יצחק אשכנזי ז"ל שנסתכל בפני תלמיד חכם א' ואמר לו נרשם בפניך עון צער בעלי חיים והיה אותו ת"ח מצטער ומפשפש בדבר עד שמצא שאשתו לא היתה נותנת מאכל לתרנגולים בבקר אלא מנחת אותן הולכות בחצר וברחוב לנקר ואז צוה עליה וזרזה לעשות להן גיבול הסובין והמים בבקר בבקר ואחרי שנתקן הדבר והרב לא ידע נסתכל בפניו

Rabbi Levi said: The whole twelve months that Noach was in the ark, neither he nor his family tasted sleep because they were responsible for feeding the domesticated, wild, and winged animals. Rabbi Eliezer said: He brought branches for the elephants... Now some ate in the second hour of the night and some in the third hour of the day, hence you know that Noach did not taste a bit of sleep. Rabbi Yochanan said... One time, when Noach was late in feeding the lion, the lion bit him, and he went away limping.

—Midrash Tanchuma Noach 9

א"ר לוי כל אותן י"ב חדש לא טעם טעם שינה לא נח ולא בניו שהיו זקוקין לזון את הבהמה ואת החיה ואת העופות ר"ע אומר אפי' שבישתין לפילין... יש בהמה שאוכלת לב' שעות בלילה ויש אוכלת לשלשה, תדע לך שלא טעמו טעם שינה דא"ר יוחנן בשם ר"א ברבי יוסי הגלילי פעם אחד שהה נח לזון את הארי הכישו הארי ויצא צולע

When Moshe our teacher was tending the flocks of Yitro in the wilderness, a lamb scampered off, and Moshe ran after it, until it approached a shelter under a rock. As the lamb reached the shelter, it came upon a pool of water and stopped to drink. When Moshe caught up with it, he said, "I did not know that you ran away because you were thirsty. Now you must be tired." So, he hoisted the lamb on his shoulder and started walking back with it. The blessed Holy One then said, "Because you showed such compassion in tending the flock of a mortal, as you live, you shall become shepherd of Israel, the flock that is mine."

—Midrash Rabbah Exodus 2:2

כשהיה משה רבינו עליו השלום רועה צאנו של יתרו במדבר, ברח ממנו גדי ורץ אחריו, עד שהגיע לחסית, כיון שהגיע לחסית, נודמנה לו בריכה של מים ועמד הגדי לשתות, כיון שהגיע משה אצלו, אמר: "אני לא הייתי יודע שרץ היית מפני צמא, עיף אתה," הרכיבו על כתיפו והיה מהלך. אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: "יש לך רחמים לנהוג צאנו של בשר ודם, כך, חיידך! אתה תרעה צאני ישראל."

A person may not buy a domesticated animal, a wild animal, or a chicken before buying food for them to eat.

—Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Ketubot 4:8

אין אדם רשאי ליקח בהמה חיה ועוף אלא אם כן התקין להן מזונות

The Ancient Farmer's Guide to Animal Care

To care for your animals in a way that shows compassion for them and follows Jewish tradition, you should...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. **Create Your Own:** _____

The Ancient Farmer's Guide to Animal Care

To care for your animals in a way that shows compassion for them and follows Jewish tradition, you should...

	Create Your Own:

Conclusion

The animals in our care look to us for sustenance and compassion. Increasingly, animals have come into our care for reasons beyond helping us work the land. How might these texts and guidelines for care apply to animals in your life, whether at home, in the natural spaces around you, at school, or elsewhere? How do you think they should apply to animals being taken care of and used by businesses? Jewish tradition can provide us with important insights into how we can best provide for the physical, mental, and emotional needs of animals.





Preventing Cruelty to Animals

Introduction

Part of caring for animals is caring for their needs and another aspect of it is making sure they do not come to harm. This section explores what Jewish tradition has to say about how we can prevent cruelty towards animals. Notice that the rules we are given about preventing cruelty apply to working domesticated animals, but these are animals that we rarely keep as part of our homes or use for working purposes today. How can we apply this message to all animals we encounter or use for our benefit, even those we do not see? Regardless of the focus of your service project, an activity from this section would be a good one to include at some point.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
שׁוֹר	<i>shor</i>	ox
חֲמוֹר	<i>chamor</i>	donkey

Activity 1:

Preventing Cruelty in Jewish Text

Below you will find several different Jewish texts related to preventing cruelty to animals.

Choose the one that you connect the most with and write a paragraph about why it speaks to you and how you might apply it in your own life.

When you see the donkey of your enemy lying under its burden and would refrain from releasing it, you must nevertheless release it.

—Exodus 23:5

כִּי־תִרְאֶה חֲמֹר שֶׁנֶּאֱדָר רֵבִץ תַּחַת
מִשָּׂאוֹ וְחָדַלְתָּ מֵעֲזֹב לוֹ עֹזֵב תֵּעֲזֹב
עֲמוֹ:

You shall not plow with an ox and an ass [animals of different sizes and strengths] together

—Deuteronomy 22:10

לֹא־תִחְרֹשׁ בְּשׂוֹר־וּבְחֹמֶר יִחְדָּו:

You shall not muzzle an ox [whose natural behavior is to eat while working] while it is threshing

—Deuteronomy 25:4

לֹא־תִחְסַם שׂוֹר בְּדִישׁוֹ:

Rav Yehuda said that Rav said:

If an animal (behemah) fell into a water canal [on Shabbat, when it is forbidden to move animals], you should bring pillows and blankets and place them underneath the animal, and if it climbs up, it climbs up.

They posed a contradictory source: If an animal fell into a water canal [on Shabbat, when it is forbidden to move animals], one should place provisions in its place, so that it doesn't die.

[Infer from this:] provisions, yes; but pillows and blankets, no!

This is not difficult: the second case refers to where it is possible [to help the animal] only with provisions; the first case refers to where it is impossible only with provisions. If it is possible with provisions, do that, but if not, then bring it pillows and blankets and put them under it.

But, by so doing, one is using items for a different purpose than they were intended for, [which is forbidden on Shabbat]!

He reasoned like this: the prohibition against using an item on Shabbat for a different purpose than it was intended for is only of Rabbinic authority, but preventing the pain of animals is of Torah authority, so a Torah commandment comes and bumps off a Rabbinic commandment.

—Babylonian Talmud,
Tractate Shabbat 128b

בְּהֵמָה שֶׁנִּפְלְהָ לְאֶמֶת הַמַּיִם - מְבִיא
כְּרִים וְכִסְתּוֹת וּמְנִיחַ תַּחְתֶּיהָ, וְאִם עָלְתָהּ
- עָלְתָהּ. מִיָּבֵי:

בְּהֵמָה שֶׁנִּפְלְהָ לְאֶמֶת הַמַּיִם - עוֹשֶׂה לָּהּ
פְּרֻנְסָה בְּמְקוֹמָהּ בְּשִׁבִיל שְׂלֵא תָמוּת.

פְּרֻנְסָה - אֵין, כְּרִים וְכִסְתּוֹת - לֹא!
לֹא קָשִׁי; הֵא - דַּאֲפֻשֵׁר בְּפְרֻנְסָה, הֵא
- דַּאֲי אֲפֻשֵׁר בְּפְרֻנְסָה. אֲפֻשֵׁר בְּפְרֻנְסָה -
אֵין, וְאֵי לֹא - מְבִיא כְּרִים וְכִסְתּוֹת וּמְנִיחַ
תַּחְתֶּיהָ.

וְהֵא קָא מְבַטֵּל כְּלֵי מַהֲיִכְנוּ!
סָבַר, מְבַטֵּל כְּלֵי מַהֲיִכְנוּ - דְּרַבְנָן, צַעַר
בְּעֵלֵי חַיִּים - דַּאֲוֹרֵייתָא, וְאֵתֵי דַּאֲוֹרֵייתָא
וְדַחֵי דְרַבְנָן.





Activity 2:

Modern vs Ancient Views on Preventing Cruelty

Many of the modern beliefs about how to prevent cruelty to animals were present hundreds and thousands of years ago in the texts of Jewish tradition. Look at the poster below about the 5 Freedoms that animals must experience to not be treated with cruelty. Then look back up at the texts in the activity above and answer the questions that are included after the poster image.

Five Freedoms



- 1** *Freedom from hunger and thirst*
by ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain health and vigor
- 2** *Freedom from discomfort*
by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- 3** *Freedom from pain, injury or disease*
by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- 4** *Freedom to express normal behavior*
by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- 5** *Freedom from fear and distress*
by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

Questions

1. *Which of the 5 Freedoms do you see represented in the Jewish texts included in the earlier activity?*

2. *Are there any of the 5 Freedoms that you don't see represented?*

3. *Are there any considerations for animal care that you see included in the Jewish texts that are not present in the 5 Freedoms?*



Conclusion

Cruelty and suffering can take many forms for nonhuman animals, just as it can for humans. Past Jewish authorities put in place rules intending to prevent abuse where it might be most likely—a family cannot muzzle their ox while it is working because it is cruel, even if the family will benefit from more grain to sell. Today, we use animals in diverse ways, many of which we do not personally witness. What forms does cruelty take, and what part can we play to prevent them? Jewish tradition can provide us with a framework to look deeply at the way we use animals and insights on how to prevent people and systems from treating them without compassion.





Learning from Animals

Introduction

Just like all of creation, animals have much to teach us. This section will explore what Jewish texts have to say about this teaching and how you might apply this idea during your service project. Regardless of the focus of your service project, an activity from this section would be a good one to include at some point.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
צְנִיעוּת	<i>tzniut</i>	modesty
חֲתוּל	<i>chatul</i>	cat
נִמְלָה	<i>nemala</i>	ant
תַּרְנֵגוֹל	<i>tarnegol</i>	chicken
דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ	<i>derech erez</i>	“The way of the world” (also refers to ‘manners’ generally)

Activity 1:

What We Can Learn from Animals

Read the following Talmud text, as well as the commentary on it.

If we had not received the Torah we would have learned modesty from watching a cat, honesty (refraining from theft) from the ant, and fidelity from the dove... and derech erez from the chicken.

—Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Eruvin 100b

אילמלא לא ניתנה תורה היינו למידין צניעות מחתול וגזל מנמלה ועריות מיונה... דרך ארץ מתרנגול.

Modesty from the cat: because it does not relieve itself in front of people and covers its excrement; Honesty from the ant: As is written, “[Go to the ant, you sluggard; see its ways, and be wise, which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provides] her food in the summer...” (Proverbs 6:8): One ant does not steal the food of another ant; And fidelity from the dove: Doves are faithful to a single partner.

—Rashi’s commentary on Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Eruvin 100b

רש"י: צניעות מחתול - שאינו מטיל רעי בפני אדם ומכסה צואתו: וגזל מנמלה - דכתיב (משלי ו:ח) (אגרה) “[תִּכְיֶינָה] בְּקִיץ לְחֶמֶה” ואין אחת גוזלת מאכל חברתה: ועריות מיונה - שאינו נזקק אלא לבת זוגו:

Following the example set by this text, write your own list of things that we learn from other animals below.

1. We learn _____ from the _____
because _____.

2. We learn _____ from the _____
because _____.

3. We learn _____ from the _____
because _____.

4. We learn _____ from the _____
because _____.



Activity 2:

Animal Tales: Lessons from Stories

Read the following Talmud text, as well as the commentary on it.

If we had not received the Torah we would have learned modesty from watching a cat, honesty (refraining from theft) from the ant, and fidelity from the dove... and derech erez from the chicken.

—Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Eruvin 100b

אילמלא לא ניתנה תורה היינו למידין צניעות מחתול וגזל מנמלה ועריות מיונה... דרך ארץ מתרנגול.

*Modesty from the cat: because it does not relieve itself in front of people and covers its excrement;
Honesty from the ant: As is written, “[Go to the ant, you sluggard; see its ways, and be wise, which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provides] her food in the summer...” (Proverbs 6:8): One ant does not steal the food of another ant;
And fidelity from the dove: Doves are faithful to a single partner.*

—Rashi’s commentary on Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Eruvin 100b

רש"י: צניעות מחתול - שאינו מטיל רעי בפני אדם ומכסה צואתו: וגזל מנמלה - דכתיב (משלי ו:ח) (אגרה) “[תִּכְיֶינָה] בְּקִיץ לְחֶמְהָ” ואין אחת גוזלת מאכל חברתה: ועריות מיונה - שאינו נזקק אלא לבת זוגו:



Now, pick a story to read from the appendix section “Animal Stories.” This section includes stories about animals ranging from Talmud to midrash on the Torah to real accounts about animals in our time.

Once you’ve read your story, answer the following questions:

What did you learn about the animal(s) in the story you read?

What attributes (e.g. modesty, honesty, fidelity, loyalty, friendship, etc) did the animals exemplify? How did they show these?

What lesson or message does their story convey to you? To all humans?



Conclusion

This idea of learning from animals can be applied during your service project. Today, when you volunteer, pay special attention to what you might be learning about yourself, those around you, your environment, and/or life in general from the animals you are working with. When you're done with your service for the day, share with a parent or mentor what you noticed and learned from the animals.





Animals as Food

Introduction

This section explores what Jewish tradition has to say about the consumption of animals as food—and how that has changed throughout texts and over time. An activity from this section would be a good one to do at some point during your service project if you're working with animals who will one day become food for humans, farm animals who are kept as pets or for education, or those who were saved from inhumane farming conditions.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
בָּשָׂר	<i>basar</i>	flesh, meat, animal
דָּם	<i>dam</i>	life-blood
בְּהֵמָה	<i>behemah</i>	domesticated animal

Activity 1:

Animal Consumption Timeline

The following are a series of texts that appear over the course of the Torah and beyond that lay down particular laws about meat consumption or which specifically address the idea of humans eating nonhuman animals. In this activity we'll be looking at them in the chronological order they appear in the texts and considering what lessons we might take away from these texts and the order in which they appear.

Read the following texts in order, then answer the questions below.

SOURCE OF TEXT	ENGLISH TEXT	HEBREW TEXT	SUMMARY OF TEXT
The Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 59b on Genesis 1:29-30 and 9:3	Adam haRishon (the first human) was not permitted to eat animal flesh, for it is written, [Behold I have given you all the herbs, etc.] to you it shall be for food, and to all the animals of the earth, (Genesis 1:29-30) implying, but the animals of the earth shall not be for you. And when the children of Noah came [out of the ark], it was permitted [for them to eat flesh], for it is said, [Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you] even as the green herb have I given you all things. (Genesis 9:3)	אדם הראשון לא הותר לו בשר לאכילה דכתיב (בראשית א, כט) לְכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָה: וּלְכָל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לְכֶם וּכְשָׂבוּ בְנֵי נֹחַ הִתִּיר לָהֶם שֵׁנָאמֵר (בראשית ט, ג) כִּי־יֵרָק עָשָׂב נָתַתִּי לְכֶם אֶת-כָּל:	In Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden), all people and all animals are vegetarian.

SOURCE OF TEXT	ENGLISH TEXT	HEBREW TEXT	SUMMARY OF TEXT
Genesis 9:3-4	Every creature that lives shall be yours to eat; as with the green grasses, I give you all these. You must not, however, eat flesh with its life-blood in it.	כָּל־רֶמֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ כִּי־רַק עֵשֶׂב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל־ אֲדָם־בְּשָׂר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ:	God notices after the flood, in the times of Noach, there is a lot of violence. Unsure what to do about it, God compromises and allows humans to eat meat, just not the living flesh.
Leviticus 11:3	Whatever [animal] has a parted hoof, and is wholly cloven-footed, and chews its cud, they are among the animals, that you may eat.	כָּל מִפְרֶסֶת פְּרָסָה וְשִׁסְעַת שִׁסְעַת פְּרָסָה מֵעֵלֶת גֵּרָה בְּבִהֶמָה אֹתָהּ תֹאכְלוּ:	God lays out which animals can and can't be eaten.
Numbers 11:19-20	You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days [of quail], but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected YHVH (Hashem) who is among you and have wept before him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt."	לֹא יוֹם אֶחָד תֹּאכְלוּן וְלֹא יוֹמִים וְלֹא חֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים וְלֹא עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִים וְלֹא עֶשְׂרִים יוֹם: עַד חֹדֶשׁ יָמִים עַד אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא מֵאַפְּכֶם וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְזָרָא יַעַן בִּי־מִאֲסַתֶּם אֶת־ה' אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְתִבְכוּ לְפָנָיו לֵאמֹר לָמָּה זֶה יַצְּאֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם:	After leaving Egypt, the Israelites sustain themselves with manna. The Israelites complain that they are not satisfied and miss the meat they ate in Egypt; God sends quail in such large numbers that they become a plague.

SOURCE OF TEXT	ENGLISH TEXT	HEBREW TEXT	SUMMARY OF TEXT
Deuteronomy 12:21	<i>If the place where YHVH (Hashem) your God has chosen to establish his name is too far from you, you may slaughter any of your herd and your flock that Hashem gives you, as I have instructed you; and you may eat to your heart's content in your settlements.</i>	<p>כִּי־יִרְחַק מִמֶּךָ הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹם שְׁמוֹ שָׁם וְזָבַחְתָּ מִבְּקָרְךָ וּמִצֹּאֲנֶךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן ה' לְךָ בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ בְּשִׂעְרֶיךָ בְּכָל אֹתוֹת נִפְשֶׁךָ:</p>	<i>God instructs that if the Temple is located too far from where one lives, that one may slaughter animals in their local area, as long as they abide by the rules of slaughter.</i>
Isaiah 11:6-7	<i>The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.</i>	<p>וְגַר זֵאֵב עִם־כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם־גְּדֵי יִרְבֵּץ וְעֵגֶל וּכְפִיר וּמְרִיא יִחְדּוּ וְנֹעַר קֹטֵן נְהַג בָּם: וּפְרָה וְדָב תִּרְעִינָה יִחְדּוּ יִרְבְּצוּ יַלְדֵיהֶן וְאַרְיֵה כִּבְקָר יֹאכַל־ תִּבְנֶן:</p>	<i>A description of "olam ha-ba" (the world to come) or a vision of a perfected world. In other words, the vision of what comes next.</i>

Questions for Exploring these Texts

Why do you think that the rules around eating or not eating meat changed over the course of the Torah?

Why do you think that God changed the rules after the flood (i.e. when Noah and his children left the ark)? Why would humans suddenly be allowed to eat meat at that particular moment?

As soon as God changed the rules to allow consumption of meat, God also set down guidelines about what kind of meat may be eaten and how. Why would that have happened directly after meat being allowed? What might that order tell us about our responsibilities if we choose to eat meat?

Why do you think that the punishment for the Israelites complaining about missing the meat they used to eat in Egypt was to send so many quail that it would come “out of your nostrils and become loathsome to you”?

*If the vision of a world to come—*olam ha-ba*—is that all animals shall lie down with one another and none shall eat the other, what is the implication for humans? Why might that have been established as the ideal that we should work towards?*

Activity 2:

Which People Should Eat Meat?

There are three places in the Talmud (a recording of the Oral Law created by the ancient rabbis, based on the Torah) where the Rabbis talk about who can/should eat meat. Essentially, the Rabbis suggest that one should only eat meat if one craves it and kills it on one's own, is wealthy, and is educated.

Read the following texts and answer the questions below.

The Torah here teaches a rule of conduct, that a person should not eat meat unless they have a special appetite for it. I might think that this means that a person should buy [meat] in the market and eat it, the text therefore states: "Then you shall kill of your herd and of your flock." (Deuteronomy 12:21)

—Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Chullin 84a

למדה תורה דרך ארץ שלא יאכל
אדם בשר אלא לתאבון
יכול יקח אדם מן השוק ויאכל
תלמוד לומר (דברים יב, כא) וְנִבְחַתָּ
מִבְּקָרְךָ וּמִצֹּאֲנֶךָ.

If [a person] has fifty maneh they may buy for his stew a litra of meat... Mar Zutra the son of Rav Nahman said: Discipline your maidens in the way of life; hence the Torah teaches a rule of conduct that a parent should not accustom their child to flesh and wine.

—Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Chullin 84a

חמשים מנה יקח לפסו ליטרא בשר...
אמר מר זוטרא בריה דרב נחמן
תן חיים לנערותיך
מיכן למדה תורה דרך ארץ שלא
ילמד אדם את בנו בשר ויין.

“This is the law [Torah] of the beast, and of the fowl;” whoever engages in [the study of] the Torah may eat the flesh of beast and fowl, but he who does not engage in [the study of] the Torah may not eat the flesh of beast and fowl.

—Babylonian Talmud,
Tractate Pesachim 49b

זאת תורת הבהמה והעוף כל העוסק
בתורה מותר לאכול בשר בהמה
ועוף וכל שאינו עוסק בתורה אסור
לאכול בשר בהמה ועוף

Questions

Why do you think that the Rabbis set these as the conditions for eating meat? What might they have been trying to accomplish with these particular limitations on meat consumption?

On average, each American today eats the equivalent of 3 hamburgers worth of meat per day and Americans collectively eat over 10 billion animals per year, not including fish and other sea creatures. How many Americans are following the first condition today? What do you think is gained or lost by this?

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

The second two conditions suggest that you must be wealthy and educated to eat meat. Given that we know that poverty and lack of access to education today have more to do with policies and structures in our society than individual strengths, weaknesses, or choices, do these last two seem fair to you? Why or why not? What are the implications of only rich, educated people eating meat?

The reality in America today because of factory farming and the number of fast food restaurants is that one can more cheaply and easily acquire meat than fresh vegetables or fruit in many places. How do you reconcile this reality with the conditions that the rabbis set above?

Conclusion

Our tradition has much to offer us about whether we should use animals as food—and if so, how we might best do that. Each of us has an individual obligation to consider this question for ourselves and come to a personal practice that feels right for us, while also taking into consideration the lives of the animals around us, the impact on other human beings, and the impact on the earth.





Animals and Kashrut

Introduction

Jewish tradition and text includes a multitude of details about the “hows” and “whys” of kashrut/keeping kosher. *Kasher* (כָּשֵׁר), or *kosher*, literally means “fit or suitable” for something—in this case, eating. While the Torah lists types of animals that are fit to consume versus others, the laws of how to slaughter an animal to render it kosher are discussed in rabbinical law. This section will explore some of those details as they relate to kosher slaughter, or *shechita* (שְׁחִיטָה), as well as some of the larger ethical questions related to how a farmed animal lives and dies in today’s industrialized farms and slaughterhouses. An activity from this section would be a good one to do at some point during your service project if you’re working with animals who will one day become food for humans, farm animals who are kept as pets or for education, or those who were saved from inhumane farming conditions.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
כָּשֵׁר	<i>kasher</i>	kosher or fit/suitable for a certain purpose
שְׁחִיטָה	<i>shechita</i>	kosher slaughter
שׁוֹחֵט, שׁוֹחֵטִים	<i>shochet (s.), shochatim (pl.)</i>	the person who performs kosher slaughter
דְּמָעוֹת	<i>d'maot</i>	tears

Activity 1:

What is Shechita (Kosher Slaughter)?

Read the following information about the laws of shechita/kosher slaughter and then answer the questions below.

Note: *Shechita* laws apply to kosher land animals, not to kosher sea life.

Who can perform *shechita*? (Based on the Mishna, Chullin 1:1-2)

Any Jewish person can perform the slaughter and the slaughter is valid except someone who has a cognitive impairment or is a minor, because it was believed that they might do the slaughter in correctly. However, if someone capable of a valid slaughter is overseeing them, then even those with cognitive impairment or minors may do it.

How is *shechita* performed? (Based on the Mishna, Chullin 1:1-2)

To be done correctly, *shechita* must sever the majority of esophagus and trachea and must be done with kosher slaughter instruments. It must also avoid the *Hamisha Poslei Shechita* (5 acts which disqualify a kosher cut). The *Hamisha Poslei Shechita* are widely considered to be the five most important laws in kosher slaughter (Code of Jewish Law Yoreh Deah 23). They are:

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
שְׁחִיָּה	<i>shehiyah</i>	pausing
דְּרָסָה	<i>drasah</i>	chopping
חֲלָדָה	<i>chaladah</i>	covering
הַגְרָמָה	<i>hagramah</i>	cutting outside the permitted area
עִקּוּר	<i>ikur</i>	tearing

With what is *shechita* performed?

Tools that one can be used include: a knife, a hand sickle, flint stone, and reed. The blade must be sharp, smooth and longer than the neck of the animal. The tool also must have a blunt, rather than pointed, end. Tools that one CANNOT use are: a reaping sickle (unless the teeth are smoothed down so that it is like a knife), a saw, teeth, or a fingernail. This is because these tools are not smooth and sharp and would strangle the animal in the process of slaughtering it and cause it great pain.

Questions

1. If someone is to do a kosher slaughter without supervision, they must:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. In order to do a *shechita* correctly you must _____ the majority of the _____ and _____.
3. The *Hamisha Poslei Shechita* are five acts which, if done, _____ a kosher slaughter.
4. Tools that are to be used for *shechita* must be:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
5. The tools that are prohibited for *shechita* are prohibited because they would _____ the animal.

Activity 2:

A Shochet (Kosher Slaughterer) and Compassion

There is a theme within several Jewish texts of concerns about shochtim (kosher slaughterers) losing their compassion as a result of doing their job killing animals.

Read the texts below that support this idea and answer the questions that follow.

Slaughter by an ape is invalid, since the Torah says: "You shall slaughter... and you shall eat" (Deuteronomy 12:21). Not that a non-Jewish person slaughtered it, not that an ape slaughtered it, not that an animal died on its own.

—Tosefta, Chullin, 1:1

ושחיטת הקוף הרי זו פסולה שנאמר
(דברים יב:כא) "וְזָבַחְתָּ... וְאָכַלְתָּ" לא
שזבח הגוי ולא שזבח הקוף ולא
שזנב מאליה:

No bull or cow shall be slaughtered on the same day with its young.

—Leviticus 22:28

ושור אוֹ-שֶׁה אֶת-בְּנוֹ לֹא
תִשְׁחַטוּ בְיוֹם אֶחָד:

Rabbi Shmuel Aryeh, of blessed memory, told me a story. In his youth, he lived in Kishilivitz, the same famous city where the rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov lived before he became famous, and was a slaughterer and butcher. I knew an eighty-year-old shochet there.

I said to him, "Is it possible you knew anyone who knew the Ba'al Shem Tov?" He said to me, "I don't know any Jews who knew him, but I know one Gentile who knew him. In my youth I lived near a Gentile, and every time I poured water over my sharpening stone to sharpen my knife, this Gentile, over 90 years old, would shake his head. I thought that it was because of his age that he did so. But one time I sensed it was his disapproval.

I asked him, "Why are you shaking your head when I am working?" He said, "You're not doing good work. Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, when he sharpened his knife, would wet his stone with tears."

—“Tears,” from the collection of stories of the Ba'al Shem Tov, “The Man and the Trees,” by S.Y. Agnon

סח לי הרב שמואל אריה עליו השלום, בילדותי דרתי בכפר קישיליביץ, הוא כפר קישיליביץ שיצא לו שם בעולם, שרב ישראל בעל שם טוב קודם שנתגלה היה שם **שוחט** ובודק. מצאתי שם **שוחט** ובודק זקן למעלה משמונים שנה.

אמרתי לו, אפשר שהכרת אדם שהכיר את הבעל שם טוב? אמר לי, יהודי שראה את הבעל שם טוב לא מצאתי, גוי שראה את הבעל שם טוב מצאתי. בימי חרפי דרתי אצל איכר אחד גוי, כל פעם שהייתי יוצק מים על אבן המשחזת להשחז את סכיני היה זקינו של האיכר, זקן כבן תשעים שנה או כבן מאה שנה, מנענע ראשו. סבור הייתי שמחמת זקנה הוא עושה כן. פעם אחת הרגשתי בו שעושה כן דרך גנאי.

שאלתי אותו, מפני מה אתה מנענע ראשך בשעת עבודתי? אמר לי, אי אתה עושה את מלאכתך יפה. ישראלקי כשהיה משחז את סכיני היה מלחלח את האבן **בדמעות**.

Do you agree that these texts make a case that we should be concerned about the loss of a shochet's capacity for compassion? Why or why not?

What are the implications—practical, social, emotional, religious, etc.—if shochatim were to suffer a loss of compassion?

In what ways might shochtim and the Jewish communities they serve prevent against a loss of compassion as it relates to slaughtering animals?

Activity 3:

“A Good Death” vs. A Good Life

Much that is written about animals and kashrut focuses on how the slaughter (or the animal’s death) must be performed. Much less focuses on what the quality of life an animal must have to be considered kosher.

Here is a text from Maimonides that describes what makes “a good death”:

Since, therefore, the desire of procuring good food necessitates the slaying of animals, the Law enjoins that the death of the animal should be the easiest. It is not allowed to torment the animal by cutting the throat in a clumsy manner, by poleaxing, or by cutting off a limb whilst the animal is alive.

—Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed III: 48

ומכיוון שהצורך במזון טוב הביא להריגת בעל-החיים, היתה כוונה למיתה הקלה לו ביותר, ונאסר לענותו בשחיטה פסולה, לנחור אותו או לחתוך ממנו איבר כמו שהבהרנו.

Several shochtim today still slaughter animals with with immense care on a small scale; but, the vast majority of animals processed in kosher slaughter plants are killed too quickly and on too massive a scale to avoid many problems that can cause animals pain and distress. Large, industrial slaughterhouses often entail careless handling by employees, mechanized systems and tools that aren’t maintained often, and, in some cases, even intentional abuse of animals at the slaughter plants before and while they are being killed.

While we can look to our laws of kashrut to help guide us in being thoughtful about the animals we eat, our reality is that most kosher slaughter today does not represent the type of relationship nor the type of death that our ancestors and rabbis envisioned and practiced.

Based on the text and information above and your own knowledge and feelings on the subject, circle the word (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree) that best describes your perspective on each statement.

Questions

1. *It is more important that an animal not be caused undue stress or pain when being slaughtered, than that they are protected from stress and pain while alive.*

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree



2. *The quality of an animal's life should hold equal weight to the quality of its death in determining whether it is kosher.*

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree



3. *Given how different our scale of farming and slaughter are today from what they were in the times of our ancestors and rabbis, we need to consider both the wisdom and limitations of kosher slaughter rules as they apply to current industrial-scale shechita.*

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree



If you were to write a set of laws of kashrut that outlined what the quality of an animal's life must be in order for it to be considered kosher, what would those laws include?

Write out some ideas here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Conclusion

While an animal's quality of life (and even pain suffered leading up to death) technically does not disqualify its kosher status, cruelty does violate the laws of tza'ar ba'alei chayim, or preventing unnecessary suffering to animals. Given that today almost all animals that are killed and sold as kosher products come from the same factory farms that cruelly confine and raise animals sold to the non-kosher market, we must take these considerations into account as we consider the choices we want to make regarding eating meat and other animal products.





Conservation and Preservation of Animal Species

Introduction

As we've explored in previous sections, the Torah, Talmud and other Jewish texts provide many examples of how to care for and protect the animals in our lives. One reason why this care and protection is important is because of the value of each animal (and species) in a biodiverse world. Biodiversity is the existence of many different kinds of plants and animals in an environment; as you may know well from learning about the web of life, all animal lives, including ours, are interconnected. All of our survival depends on a world where many different living organisms exist and interact with one another in shared habitats and ecosystems. Regardless of the focus of your service project, an activity from this section would be a good one to include at some point.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
צִפּוֹר	<i>tzipor</i>	bird
שְׁלוּחַ הַקֶּן	<i>shiluach haken</i>	sending away from the nest
בַּל תִּשְׁחִית	<i>bal tashchit</i>	do not destroy/waste

Activity 1: Writing Your Own Proverb to Support Biodiversity

The following activity is adapted from a lesson by Laura Bellows:

Compassion towards all animals—be they mammals, insects, creepy-crawly or cuddly, is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, as is the mandate to see ourselves as one important, yet interdependent, part of the animal kingdom. Each animal has its own gifts to share, even those we see as inconsequential. We even have an entire book, Perek Shirah, that outlines gifts we receive from each animal. Part of the work of conserving and preserving species is appreciating the value of even those animals we don't like.

We read in the book of Proverbs:

Four are among the tiniest on Earth, yet they are the wisest of the wise: Ants are a folk without power, yet they prepare food for themselves in the summer; the Badger is a folk without strength, yet it makes its home [by digging] in the rock; the Locusts have no king, yet they all march forth in formation; you can catch the Lizard in your hand yet it is found in royal palaces.

—Proverbs 30:24-28

אַרְבָּעָה הֵם קְטַנֵי-אָרֶץ וְהֵמָּה חֲכָמִים
מִחֲכָמִים: הַנְּמָלִים עִם לֹא-עֹז וַיִּכְיֶנּוּ
בְקִיץ לְחֹמֶם: שְׂפָנִים עִם לֹא-עֲצוּם
וַיִּשִׂימוּ בַסֶּלַע בֵּיתָם: מֶלֶךְ אֵין לְאַרְבֵּה
וַיִּצָא חִצָּץ כְּלוֹ: שְׂמָמִית בְּיָדַיִם תִּתְפֹּשׂ
וְהִיא בְּהִיכְלֵי מֶלֶךְ:

Based on this example, create five proverbs of your own for animals (be they mammals, reptiles, insects, etc.) that you don't like.

Proverb 1:

_____ is an animal with/out _____,
yet it _____.

Proverb 2:

_____ is an animal with/out _____,
yet it _____.

Proverb 3:

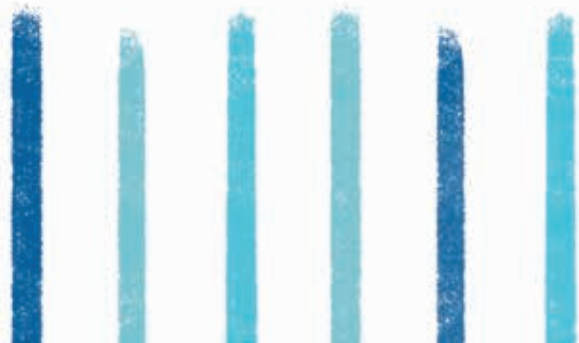
_____ is an animal with/out _____,
yet it _____.

Proverb 4:

_____ is an animal with/out _____,
yet it _____.

Proverb 5:

_____ is an animal with/out _____,
yet it _____.



Activity 2:

Illustrating Conservation

Below are two texts that relate to conservation and preservation of animal species. The first text refers to the commandment of **shiluach haken**, which instructs a person to shoo away any wild mother bird from her nest before collecting her offspring or eggs. The second relates to the ethical principle and prohibition against destruction, *bal tashchit*.

Read each text and in the space given, draw an illustration that visually describes the core message of the text.

If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother sitting over the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young. Let the mother go, and take only the young, in order that you may fare well and have a long life.

—Deuteronomy 22:6-7

כִּי יִקְרָא קוֹן-צִפּוֹר לְפָנֶיךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּכֹל-
עֵץ אוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲפֹרָחִים אוֹ בִּיצִים
וְהָאִם רֹבֶצֶת עַל-הָאֲפֹרָחִים אוֹ עַל-
הַבִּיצִים לֹא-תִקַּח הָאִם עִלֵּי-הַבָּנִים:
שִׁלַּח תִּשְׁלַח אֶת-הָאִם וְאֶת-הַבָּנִים
תִּקַּח-לָךְ לְמַעַן יֵיטֵב לָךְ וְהָאֲרֻכָּתְךָ
יָמִים:

At the time that the Holy One created the first humans, God took them on a tour of the Garden of Eden saying to them, "Look at my creation! See how lovely and perfect they are? I created it all for your sake. Make sure you don't ruin or destroy My world, for if you ruin it, there will be no one to repair it after you."

—Midrash Rabbah Ecclesiastes 7:13

בשעה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את
אדם הראשון, נטלו והחזירו על כל
אילני גן עדן, ואמר לו: ראה מעשי
כמה נאים ומשובחין הן, וכל מה
שבראתי, בשבילך בראתי, תן דעתך
שלא תקלקל ותחריב את עולמי,
שאם קלקלת אין מי שיתקן אחריך.



Activity 3:

A Hypothetical Interview with Rabbi Rosenn

Below you will find an excerpt of an article on the importance of protecting biodiversity through conservation and preservation that was written by Rabbi David Rosenn. Imagine that you're going to be doing an interview with Rabbi Rosenn about his writing and his views on the subject.

Answer the questions below in preparation for the interview.

Excerpt from: *Protecting Biodiversity: A Covenant With Every Living Thing*, By Rabbi David Rosenn

Preserving Natural Eco-Systems

Today, scientists suggest that the best way to preserve the world's biodiversity is to preserve as many as possible of its natural eco-systems. Especially important are those such as rain forests, which contain a large concentration of plant and animal species.

By protecting the global environment, and specifically by designating certain biological "hotspots" as inviolate preserves [in other words, places which cannot be harmed], we can slow the narrowing of the genetic flexibility that ensures life on Earth.

*Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Rav: "Everything that God created in the world has a purpose. Even things that a person may consider to be unnecessary have their place in creation" (Midrash, Genesis Rabbah 10:8). **We are witnessing and helping produce the most rapid decline of species diversity in the history of the earth,** and yet we barely understand the place in creation of most of the world's species, including those that have been lost to us through extinction...*

*Reinforcing this midrashic awareness of the versatility of species, **Judaism contains a legal proscription against wanton destruction of property and natural resources, known by its command form bal tashchit, "do not destroy."** This prohibition reflects the belief that human beings are temporary tenants on God's earth (Leviticus 25:23), charged to till it for their needs, but also to tend it, that it may be saved for future generations (Genesis 2:15)...*

Preserving biodiversity is an issue of planetary survival, but it is also—as we have seen—a theological issue. Nature’s stunning variety often invokes feelings of deep fascination and awe, attitudes closely associated with religious experience. **Maintaining our capacity to appreciate such feelings—our capacity for wonder—may enable us to enlarge our sense of God’s presence in the world and to enhance our appreciation for the sidrei bereshit—the orders of creation.** Conversely, by allowing creation to be diminished, we invariably diminish ourselves as well.

Summary

Some of Rabbi Rosenn’s key points include:

1. We must follow recommendations based in scientific evidence to preserve as many ecosystems as possible, especially those that are extremely sensitive and biodiverse.
2. We know that every species has its place in the web of life, and yet many are disappearing today at an alarming rate due to human actions.
3. We learn from the commandment *bal tashchit*, or “do not destroy,” that Judaism requires us to preserve the earth for all life’s future generations.
4. Our survival—both physical and spiritual—depends upon the survival of all creation.

Questions

Having read Rabbi Rosenn’s writing, what three questions would you want to ask him about what he wrote or about this topic more generally?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Is there a part of what he wrote that you either really connected with or agreed with or really disagreed with that you would want to discuss with him? If so, what was it and how would you respond?

Conclusion

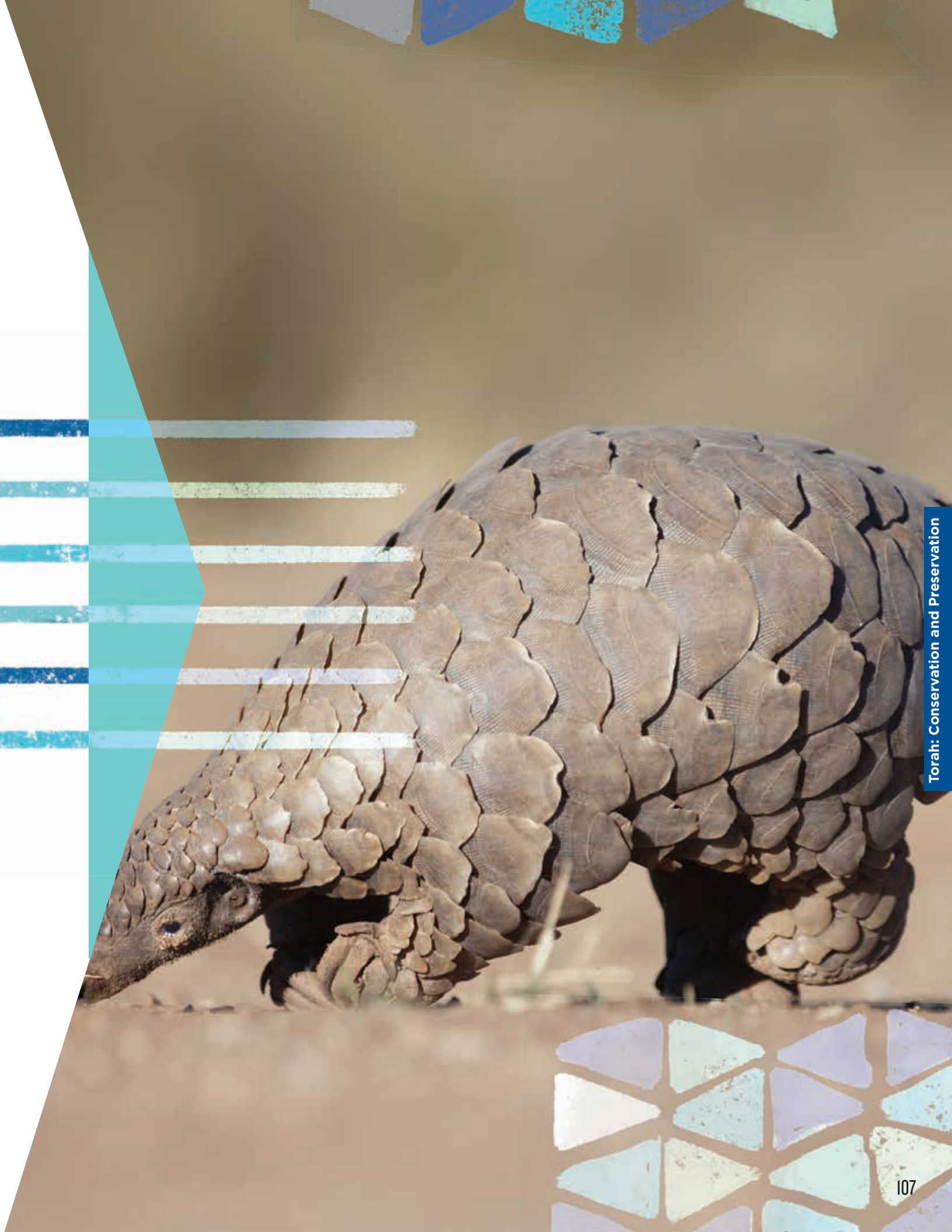
As it says in midrash on Genesis:

Even things that you may regard as superfluous to the world, such as fleas, gnats and flies, even they are included in the creation of the world and the blessed Holy One carries out the Divine purpose through everything – even a snake, a scorpion, a gnat or a frog.

—Midrash Rabbah Genesis 10:7

אֶפְלוּ דְבָרִים שְׂאֵתָהּ רוּאָה אוֹתָן שֶׁהֵן
יְתִירָה בְּעוֹלָם כְּגוֹן זְבוּבִין וּפְרָעוֹשִׁין
וַיִּתְּוֹשִׁין אֵף הֵם בְּכֻלָּל בְּרִייתוֹ שֶׁל
עוֹלָם הֵן, וּבְכֹל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרִךְ הוּא
עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלִיחוֹתוֹ: אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי נָחָשׁ,
אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי יְתוּשָׁה, אֶפְלוּ עַל יְדֵי
צְפַרְדֵּי.

Acknowledging and protecting the unique role of each living thing in our world is an important expression of compassion for those animals, and urges us to ensure our own and all species' survival for the future.





Animals in Jewish Ritual: Past and Present

Introduction

While most contemporary Jewish rituals do not include live animals (animal products are still used for several important ritual objects, like the shofar and torah scroll), some of the intentions behind ancient rites are still relevant. We can find meaning in and learn about Judaism's relationship to animals with rituals still done today, like blessings over food, and even with rituals no longer performed today, like animal sacrifice.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
נֶפֶשׁ, נִפְשׁוֹת	<i>nefesh, nefashot</i>	soul/s, spirit/s, person/s
קֹרְבָן	<i>korban</i>	sacrificial offering (animal or non-animal)
לְהַקְרִיב	<i>le'hakriv</i>	to sacrifice or to draw close
כָּל-חַי	<i>kol chai</i>	all life

Activity 1:

Saying Blessings over Food from Animals

Jewish tradition has specific liturgy that corresponds to specific foods, but when it comes to consuming animal products, we only have one set of before and after blessings that apply to many other kinds of foods—they also cover water, candy, or any food that has a mix of ingredients.

Before eating meat (including beef, poultry, and fish), eggs, or dairy, there is a Jewish custom to say a blessing called “Shehakol.” This is also the same blessing we say over something with ingredients mixed together such as candy or soda.

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech
ha'olam shehakol nihiyeh bidvaro*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ:

*Blessed are you, YHVH (Hashem) our
God, cosmic majesty, through whose
word everything came into being.*

After eating the items above, we say a blessing called “Borei Nefashot”:

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech
ha'olam borei nefashot rabot vechesronan
al kol mah shebara(ta) l'hachayot (bahem)
nefesh kol chai. Barukh chei ha'olamim.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא נַפְשוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחִסְרוֹןָן עַל כָּל
מַה שֶּׁבָרָא(ת) לְהַחְיֹת (בָּהֶם) נַפְשׁ כָּל
חַי: בְּרוּךְ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים:

*Blessed are you, YHVH (Hashem) our
God, cosmic majesty, who creates a
diverse multitude of creatures, and an
absence in all of them through which their
beings are animated with the Spirit of
Life. Blessed is the Life of the Cosmos.*

Compare these two blessings.

1: *Why do you think the rabbis didn't write a unique blessing for eating animal products?*

2: *If you were to compose a unique blessing to say before eating meat, eggs, or dairy, what would it be?*



Activity 2:

Honoring Food from Animals

Most modern individuals consider animal products as one of many packaged items available at the local grocery store, and do not often consider the source of their food as being from a living animal.

The cup of yogurt, the scrambled eggs, the hamburger get mixed with other items to become a meal, with the source of the food long forgotten. Whereas when we say “borei pri hagafen/creator of the fruit of the vine” over some grape juice and an image of a grape vine comes to mind, our Hebrew prayers over animal products do not connect us back to the animal.

*Rabbi Dr. Tzemah L. Yoreh wrote some poems because he wanted to have a unique prayer over animal products that connected him to the original source of the food. Read one or both of the following modern day Hebrew poems and answer the questions below. Used with permission of the author, originally printed in *By the Sweat of Their Brow*.*

בִּיצִים (Eggs)

*Layer of gold eggs
A scrambled ovation
Is your just due*

מְטִילָה יִזְעָד
כָּל הַיּוֹם מְחַזֶּרֶת
לְהַשְׁבִּיעַנִי
בְּעַל כְּרַחֵךְ אֶת דּוֹגְרֵת

מוֹצָרֵי חֵלֶב (Milk Products)

*Yummy versatile mold
Curdles all in its path
To reign over the meal*

מְזַהֶבֶךְ הַלְבָן יוֹנְקִים בְּנֵי אָדָם
בְּרוּכָה הַפְּרָה
הָאֵם שֶׁל כּוֹלֵם

(Drops) הטיפות

Black Milk and White Meat

Why do you chew upon our tender flesh

Splutter the drops

Of milk-fed veal chops

Upon the spotless white tunic of the chef

הִקְהָה אֶת שְׁנֵיהֶם
אָמְרוּ הַטִּיפוֹת הָאֲדוּמֹת
הַבֶּשֶׂר כְּבָר לְבָן
אֵיכָה תֵעָלוּ בַּמַּעֲלוֹת

After reading these poems, take some time to consider the poet's perspective, and whether you would want to try saying a poem like this before eating these types of food from animals.

Questions

Do you think the speaker in the poem is enjoying the meat, eggs, or milk he is eating?

Is the speaker in the poem considering the animal's life while eating these foods?

If you eat eggs, dairy, or meat, do you think of the life of the animal these products come from? In the case of meat, do you think about how the animal died?

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Name three things a person can do to honor the life of an animal they are consuming, or whose products they are consuming.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Imagine you're writing a letter to the owner of a company that produces and sells meat (including beef, poultry, and fish), eggs, or dairy.

- What do you want to ask them about the life of the animal?
- How would you share your feelings about the animal's life once the food from the animal is on your plate?



Activity 3:

Modern Prayer as Substitute for Animal Sacrifices in the Torah

In the ancient world, animal sacrifice was the core method of worshipping the divine. Sacrifices were given as expressions of human feelings towards God, like a desire for closeness, a show of gratitude, or wish to be pardoned from intentional or unintentional sins. Though not all sacrifices included animals, animal slaughter by priests in the Temple in Jerusalem was a regular component of daily temple service. When a sacrifice was made, it was also virtually the only time the Israelites ate meat (depending on the sacrifice, flesh was consumed after it was burnt on the altar). Ritual sacrifice no longer takes place due to the destruction of the Temple, and our way of worshipping God today with prayer is a result of the shift away from sacrifices.

Think about what ancient Israelites might have thought in offering animal sacrifices and answer the questions below. Then, look at the chart and think about the ways you express or act on the intent that each sacrifice represents.

What might have been the value of having an animal in ancient times? Why might an animal be a suitable 'sacrifice' (remember that sacrifice means to brave a loss, to give up something)?

What is accomplished with sacrifices that is not accomplished with prayer? What is accomplished with prayer that is not accomplished with sacrifices?

Look at the intent behind some of the original sacrifices described below. Instead of making an offering on an altar, how do you deal with these feelings or intentions either through action or through prayer today?

KIND OF SACRIFICE	PURPOSE/INTENTION	WHAT I DO / HOW I EXPRESS THIS FEELING
<p>Burnt offering</p>	<p>To express complete submission to God's will</p>	
<p>Peace offering</p>	<p>To express thanks or gratitude</p>	
<p>Sin offering</p>	<p>To ask for pardoning of unintentional sins</p>	
<p>Guilt offering</p>	<p>To ask for pardoning of intentional sins like stealing or breaking trust, or if you're not sure if you committed a sin</p>	



Conclusion

It is important to remember that much of our heritage included rituals that used, included, and honored animals. Even if we won't always be able to interact with the animals we are eating before we consume them or their products, Jewish tradition offers a variety of rituals to honor the animal's life. As for ritual sacrifice, which we no longer perform, we can still understand the history and meaning behind the original practice. As you'll learn in the next section, as contemporary Jews we can also renew our tradition with meaning through designing new rituals that honor animals.



ששכה
טובה!



Including Animals in Jewish Ritual

Introduction

Do you have any rituals that you practice with your companion animals? Maybe you have a special day that you give your dog her regular bath, or a day your cat gets his brushing. Maybe you've even given your companion animals a gift on Hanukkah to include them in your holiday activities. Domesticated and wild animals have been part of Jewish ritual for a long time, and Jews today still create novel rituals to honor the animals in their lives.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
שְׁמִטָּה	<i>shmitah</i>	sabbatical year
בְּהֵמָה, בְּהֵמוֹת	<i>behemah (s.) behemot (pl.)</i>	domesticated animal/s
חַיָּה, חַיֹּת	<i>chayah (s.) chayot (pl.)</i>	wild animal/s
חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה	<i>chayat hasadeh</i>	literally, “wild animal of the field”

Activity 1:

Learning from the Laws of Shabbat and Shmitah

The Jewish people have been building their schedules and their budgets around the animals in their lives for centuries. But what about including them in cultural practices? The following texts include animals in sets of rituals around Shabbat and Shmitah.

In Text A, the section of Exodus that commands the laws of Shabbat shows that animals also need a rest of the sabbath. In texts B and C which refer to the sabbatical or “shmitah” year of a rest or “sabbath” of the land, they indicate the importance of wild animals having sufficient access to food, even when storage meant for humans is scarce.

Read the following two texts and answer the questions.

TEXT A:

...Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of YHVH (Hashem) your god: you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your animals, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days Hashem made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and they rested on the seventh day; therefore Hashem blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

—Exodus 20:9-11

...שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-
מְלֹאכֶתְךָ וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַה'
אֱלֹקֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלָאכָה אַתָּה
וּבְנֶךָ-וּבִתֶּךָ עֹבֵדְךָ וְאֹמֶתְךָ וּבְהֵמָתְךָ
וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים
עָשָׂה ה' אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ
אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיִּנַּח
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל-כֵּן בֵּרַךְ ה' אֶת-יּוֹם
הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהּ:

TEXT B:

For six years you are to sow your land and to gather in its produce, but in the seventh, you are to let it go and to let it be, that the needy of your people may eat, and what remains, the wildlife of the field shall eat. Do thus with your vineyard, with your olive-grove.

—Exodus 23:10-11

וּשְׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע אֶת-אֲרֶצְךָ וְאָסַפְתָּ
אֶת-תְּבוּאָתָהּ: וְהַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּשְׁמְטָנָהּ
וּנְטַשְׁתָּהּ וְאָכְלוּ אֲבִינֵי עִמָּךְ וַיִּתְּרֶם
תֹּאכַל מֵיַד הַשָּׂדֶה בֶּן-תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכַרְמְךָ
לְיִיתְךָ:

TEXT C:

*You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your untrimmed vines; it shall be a year of complete rest for the land. But you may eat whatever the land during its sabbath will produce—you, your male and female slaves, the hired and bound laborers who live with you, and **your animals and the wild animals** in your land may eat all its yield.*

—Leviticus 25:5-7

אֶת סְפִיחַ קְצִירְךָ לֹא תִקְצֹר וְאֶת-
עֲנָבֵי נִזְיֶרְךָ לֹא תִבְצֹר שְׁנַת שְׁבִתוֹן
יְהִי לְאָרֶץ: וְהִיְתָה שְׁבֵת הָאָרֶץ
לְכֶם לְאֲכֹלָה לָךְ וּלְעַבְדְּךָ וּלְאִמְתְּךָ
וּלְשִׁכְיֶרְךָ וּלְתוֹשְׁבֵי הַגָּרִים עִמָּךְ:
וּלְבְהֵמָתְךָ וּלְחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֲרֶצְךָ תִּהְיֶה
כָּל-תְּבוּאָתָהּ לְאֲכֹל:

Questions

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Questions

1: *Most of us are familiar with Shabbat as a day of rest from our work. Why do you think animals are included in the laws of Shabbat? How might this apply to animals who aren't working the other six days?*

2: *What might be the importance to humans in including animals in the laws and rituals above?*

3: *Text B and C outline the basic laws of Shmitah, which include sharing the harvest with wild and domesticated animals. How do these groups of animals benefit from the ritual of having access to eat whatever is growing naturally?*

4: *Choose a wild or a domesticated animal that you've observed in modern times. What would be different for that animal to receive a full day or year of rest? Pretend you are that animal writing a letter where you are asking for a day off. What does a day of rest mean for you? What does it look like? What are you resting from?*



Activity 2:

Honoring Our Animals as a Jewish Practice Today

Can a cat say kiddush? Does a dog do motzi? Even though our animals won't be saying the prayers out loud with us, we can still find creative ways to include our companion animals when we make blessings and take part in Jewish rituals at home.

Read through the suggestions below. Then, take a few minutes to design a ritual where you can involve the animals in your life. Use the following sentences as a guide, or design your own using examples from above.

Here are a few suggestions for including your companion animals in rituals at home:

- 1. As you are preparing challah for Shabbat, put aside some extra dough to play with and eventually make into the shape of one of your or your neighbor's' pets. Then make a photo collage with the animal and the challah shaped version next to each other.*
- 2. On Shabbat or any Yom Tov (holy day) when we are meant to take a break from our busy lives, include your companion animal on a nature walk or hike in a place where you can both safely explore and enjoy some quiet time.*
- 3. When gathering the family in the sukkah to shake the lulav on Sukkot, grab a few treats and encourage your cat, dog, or other type of companion animal to join. Say the blessings with your family. For animals that can safely join you outside during a meal, enjoy some quality time with them surrounded by nature!*
- 4. The weeks leading up to Passover can include long hours cleaning and sorting out pantries. If you have chickens or another animal who can safely eat food scraps, this can be a lot of bonus snacks for them!*
- 5. The next time you gather as a family to take part in a Jewish ritual, design another way to include the animals in your life.*

My Vision for Animals in a Jewish Ritual:

Using the worksheet below, design a new way to include animals in a Jewish ritual. It could be something you already do, or it could be something special you design just for them.

The animal(s) we can include will be (list the species): _____

Their name(s) _____

When we do the ritual, this is how I expect the animal to react: _____

Including this animal in the ritual might make me feel: _____

This is what the ritual would include:

Conclusion

It is important to remember that much of our heritage included rituals that used, included, and honored animals. Even if we won't always be able to interact with the animals we are eating before we consume them or their products, Jewish tradition offers a variety of rituals to honor the animal's life. As for ritual sacrifice, which we no longer perform, we can still understand the history and meaning behind the original practice. As you'll learn in the next section, as contemporary Jews we can also renew our tradition with meaning through designing new rituals that honor animals.



Animals and Spirituality

Introduction

Most of us have already experienced spending time with animals as a way to relax, share love, or simply play. In a previous chapter (page 121), we looked at Jewish texts that encouraged us to spend time with animals in order to learn from and about them. In this section, we will consider how connecting with animals can support our individual and communal spiritual practices.

Vocabulary

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATED HEBREW	ENGLISH
נֶפֶשׁ	<i>nefesh</i>	soul, spirit, person
רוּחַ	<i>ru'ach</i>	wind, spirit

Activity 1:

Animal Witness & Embodying

Engaging in religious services can sometimes be confusing, boring, or make us restless. Spending time with animals can actually clue us in to the experience of deep presence that can often be difficult to achieve on our own. The following are a few options for spiritual practices that you can do in your home or outside. After trying one or two, you might try thinking back to them as a tool to connect during religious services you attend with your community.

Option A: Walking Meditation

- *Whether walking with a clear aim or simply to move their body, animals can teach us how to fully be in our body as we move about.*
- *Find a bird, such as a chicken or gull, or a dog you can walk with or follow.*
- *First, observe their body language as they walk. Consider—what is the focus of their vision or smell? What compels them to stop?*
- *Second, allow yourself to keep pace with them. Consider—does their pace differ as the surroundings change?*
- *Third, notice if the animals is noticing you. If appropriate, give the animal a treat and see how another round of walking together goes. Consider—does the animal continue on their own or with you?*
- *Practice walking without following the animal, alternating your focus on the sensations in your body—neck, shoulders, hips, knees, heels, balls of your feet. Do this for 5-10 minutes, not to get anywhere, just to be present with your body.*

Option B: Sitting Meditation

Simply sitting still, breathing and being present is a great skill for us to learn from animals.

- *Find a sleeping animal such as cat or guinea pig. Note: the goal for the human in this practice is not to fall asleep—rather to practice sitting quietly and breathing.*
- *Do a few stretches to relax your muscles before you'll need to be still. No need to do a formal round of stretching—just consider where in your body you need a little stretch.*
- *Sit nearby as not to disturb them.*

- Find a comfortable balanced sitting position. Make sure your feet and hands are in a specific place where you won't be tempted to move them.
- Observe the breathing pattern of the sleeping animal. Try counting a full 60 seconds—does the animal stretch or readjust while sleeping or stay completely still?
- Try repeating the pattern you observed—either a full 60 seconds of still silence or some combination of stillness and light stretching.
- Repeat the practice for a longer time period (with or without an animal present) until you can sit still for 5 minutes. You can try it with counting (in your mind), or by keeping a visualization of the sleeping animal as a way to stay present and still.

Option C: Embodying Animals

This activity is particularly for students using this workbook who do not have access to live animals during their project..

All animals have specific physical qualities that make them suited to their environment. These adaptations take hundreds or thousands of years to develop—animals less suited for their environment might not reproduce or might get killed off more easily. In the case of domesticated animals, humans selectively breed animals for certain qualities.

Choose an animal (from below) to “become.” Walk around as that being for 1-2 minutes to experience life and perception as your chosen animal, focusing on their special adaptation.



Deer - Ears: *Deer have a great sense of hearing. They have a lot of muscles attached to their ears which allow them to turn their ears in any direction, without moving their heads. They can hear higher frequencies of sound than humans.*



Cow - Tongue: *Cows actually tear grass with their tongue, not their teeth! Cows also use their tongues to lick their young, groom one another, and clean their own noses (yes, that's right). Their tongues are even long and agile enough to open gate latches.*



Eagle - Eyes: *If you swapped your eyes for an eagle's, you could see an ant crawling on the ground from the roof of a 10-story building. You could make out the expressions on basketball players' faces from the worst seats in the arena. Objects directly in your line of sight would appear magnified, and everything would be brilliantly colored.*

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



Dog - Nose: *Dogs have a very acute sense of smell, in part because of a constantly wet nose. In any animal, before odor molecules can reach smell receptors, they must get through a layer of mucus—and some molecules are absorbed quicker than others. The odor molecules are then latched onto by nerve cells, which are much more abundant in dogs than in humans. You can make yourself have better smell differentiation by giving yourself a wet nose! Lick your hand and wipe it on the tip of your nose to see for yourself.*

What does it feel like to experience life—seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, and moving—like a different animal?

What effect does the experience have on you physically? Emotionally?



Activity 2:

Animal Souls

Throughout history, rabbis and philosophers have asked the question: do animals have souls? While many Jewish scholarly views reject the idea that non-humans possess the same or similar spiritual part of being as us, we read a variety of texts that show a clear belief in the existence of animal souls.

As you read through the following Jewish texts, explore this question as well as what it means for an animal to have a soul. Then, answer the questions below.

“And Elohim remembered Noah and every wild animal and every domesticated animal with him in the ark...” (Gen. 8:1)
It’s written: ‘A righteous [person] knows the soul (nefesh) of his animal [Prov 12:10]’. The Righteous One of the Cosmos (God) even understands the soul of their animals, even when God is angry.

—Midrash Tanchuma Noach 10

”וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת-נֹחַ [וְאֵת כָּל-הַחַיָּה
וְאֵת-כָּל-הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה]”
זש”ה (משלי יב:י) ”יודע צדיק נפש
בְּהֵמָתוֹ” יודע צדיקו של עולם אפילו
נפש בהמות אפילו בשעת כעסו

So would Rebbi Sim’ai say: All creatures that were created from the heavens, their soul (nefesh) and their **body** are from the heavens, and all creatures that were created from the earth, their soul and their body are from the earth, except for this human, for his soul is from the heavens and his body is from the earth...

—Sifrei Devarim Piska 306

וכך היה רבי סימאי אומר כל הבריות
שנבראו מן השמים נפשם וגופן מן
השמים וכל בריות שנבראו מן הארץ
נפשם וגופם מן הארץ [חוץ מן האדם
הזה שנפשו מן השמים וגופו מן
הארץ]

*A righteous [person] knows
the nefesh of his animal...*

—Proverbs 12:10

יודע צדיק נפש בהמתו...

*Who knows, the ru'ach of the children
of Adam, if she rises upward, and the
ru'ach of the domesticated **animal**, if
she descends below, to the earth?*

—Ecclesiastes 3:21

מי יודע רוח בני האדם
העלה היא למעלה ורוח
הבהמה היורדת היא
למטה לארץ:

*According to you, what could it mean for an animal to have a soul or not have a soul?
If animals do have a soul, does that mean we should treat them any differently than if
they don't?*

Pick a text that best states a belief in animal souls. How does it express this?

Does recognizing animal souls support kindness to animals? If yes, how so?

Optional additional activity:

Using water colors, clay, collage, or another material, create a piece of art that represents one or more of the texts above.



Activity 3:

Praying with the Animals

Do animals have spiritual experiences? Several animal scientists and behavior experts have recorded accounts of animals demonstrating rituals like funerals for dead family and community members, and experiencing what seem like inspired moments of awe.

Read the text below. Then, using the steps suggested below, create your own animal “prayer.”

The famous primatologist, Dr. Jane Goodall, who has witnessed chimpanzees start to dance at the onset of a storm, has pondered:

“Is it not possible that these performances are stimulated by feelings akin to wonder and awe? After a waterfall display the performer may sit on a rock, his eyes following the falling water. What is it, this water?”

(2005. Primate spirituality. In The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature. edited by B. Taylor. Thoemmes Continuum, New York. Pp. 1303-1306)



How would animals express themselves in these moments in a language we could understand? In the Jewish tradition, philosophers and rabbis have wondered about this question as well. Perek Shirah is a collection of passages selected from the Hebrew Bible as well as a few other sources. Most of the passages imagine: what would animals say if they prayed?

- 1. Choose a particular animal (such as a dog or cat you know) or an animal species (such as a deer or a squirrel).*
- 2. Consider 3-5 things the animal might pray for. Keep in mind it will be different if the animal is domesticated, farmed, or part of wildlife.*
- 3. Pick one of the following formulas to draft the prayer for the animal.*
 - a. May it be your will, God, that...*
 - b. I am grateful for _____ (something the animal already has), and am humbly seeking _____.*
 - c. Blessed be the Eternal who provides for _____.*
 - d. Make up your own formula for a prayer or poem.*

Optional additional activity:

What would your favorite animal teach? In Perek Shirah, all sorts of animals—dogs, cats, snakes, and even stars, clouds, and other parts of the earth—speak some of the most dear parts of the Torah, and often it's very mysterious why exactly they might be saying them. Perhaps you'll have an idea why.

Visit <http://opensiddur.org/prayers-for/special-days/new-years-days/la-beheimot/perek-shira-chapter-of-song/> to see samples from this text.

Conclusion

Whether learning spiritual practice from spending time with animals is new for you or not, you are encouraged to take this idea to family and friends as a fresh way to honor and connect with animals. By considering the spiritual lives of animals, we can see the world through their eyes and better take the time to address their needs.





Avodah: Engaging in Service

As we discussed earlier, each day you do service should include the following three parts: *Torah, Avodah, and Reflection*.

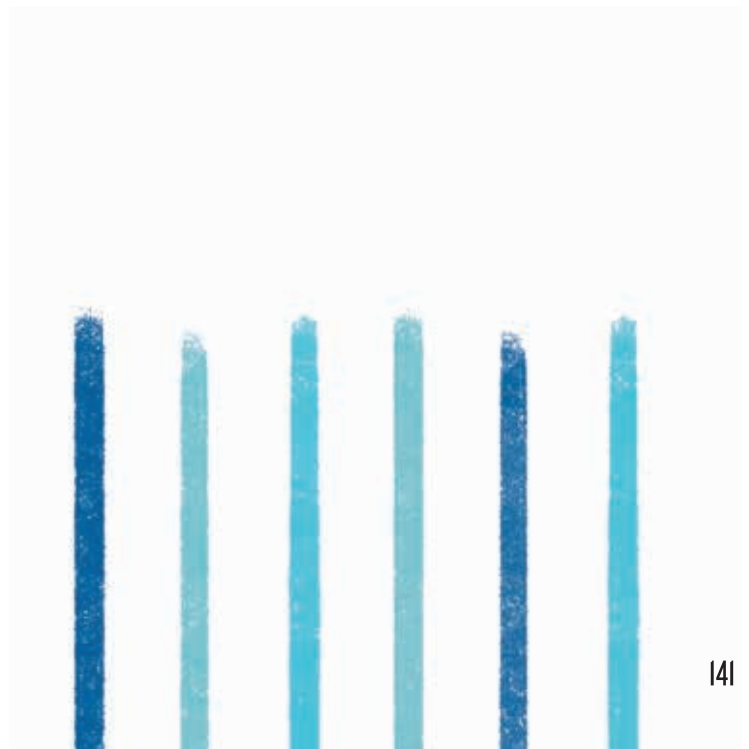
This section provides the materials for the following part of that process:

Torah (pre-service)	Avodah (service)	Reflection (post-service)
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Introduction

How we go about doing our service is as important as what we do. You don't have to write anything down just yet, but try to notice the different physical sensations and emotions that you experience while you serve (what you see, hear, smell, feel).

This chapter includes some resources to help you think about how to engage in your service consciously. We recommend reading through them before your first service session and you can refer back to them during your service as needed.



Tips for a Successful Direct Service Experience

Here are some things you can do to make your service experience as successful as possible:

For your first visit:

- *The day before, ask your parent/guardian/mentor to call your contact to confirm the day and time of your visit and get any details you need about how to find the organization or the specific place you'll be meeting, what you should wear, anything you should bring with you, etc.*
- *If doing volunteer tasks, you may be asked to sign (with your guardian) a variety of documents including, but not limited to:*
 - *Code of Conduct for Volunteers*
 - *Liability Waiver in case of an accident*
 - *Permission for your picture to be used on social media*

With your parent/guardian/mentor, be sure to download and/or ask for these documents ahead of time so that all expectations are clear.

- *Approach your first visit with a sense of curiosity and exploration. The organization has a lot of experience and expertise in their work. If they do something in a way that surprises you, seek to understand why they do it that way.*
- *Be patient. You may be learning new information or new skills and you're not going to get everything perfect the first time. Be patient with yourself as you learn.*

Throughout your service:

- *If you come across a situation where you're unsure what to do or are confused by something, always ask staff member or other trusted adult first, rather than trying to figure it out yourself.*
- *Organizations usually have an infinite amount of work that needs to be done, but volunteers don't always know what that is. If you complete a task you've been given and have more time but are unsure of what to do next, ask a staff person. It is very likely that they have another task that you can help with.*
- *You may have challenging days during your service project. The tasks you're asked to do might be difficult or confusing or not as exciting as you might have expected. You may experience the sickness or death of one of the animals that you're working with. When these situations occur, try to see them within the larger picture and context of your entire service project. Also, talk with staff, family or a mentor about what was challenging and if there is anything you might do to address the challenges moving forward.*



Learning about the Animals, Humans, and Organization

While you're serving, you should spend some time learning more about the experiences of the animals and people you're working with.

The following are some questions you could use to help you dig deeper and structure that research.

History of the Organization

Who started the organization?

What are/were they responding to?

What justice issues motivated them to found it?

Where does the funding come from for the organization?

What is the organization's mission?

Questions about the Staff

How did they decide to do this work?

Where did they get their training?

Do they eat animals? Why or why not?

Questions about Procedures

What happens when an animal gets sick?

What happens when an animal dies?

What happens when two or more animals don't get along?

If applicable to your project (i.e. if you are helping, doing direct care for, or researching specific animals or groups of animals), find out more about the animals themselves by asking someone who works for the organization or doing research about them.



If you're working with a group of animals...

Where are the animals originally from?

Are they wild or domesticated?

What do they eat in the wild?

What do they eat here?

What does their day look like?

If you are working with individual animals...

Where was he/she born?

How did he/she end up here?

What does his/her future look like? Will he/she be here forever? Be released to the wild?

Get adopted? Become food?



Tips on Working with Live Animals

Working in an environment where there are live animals is exciting for volunteers.

There are some things to keep in mind while working at the organization that houses them:

- *All direct interactions with animals—handling, feeding, walking, etc—should be taught, explained, and/or demonstrated by a trained staff member or experienced volunteer. Even if you have prior experience working with animals, only engage in an activity with the animals once you are asked to do so.*
- *Even if you don't get to have direct physical contact with the animals you're working around, keep in mind that the organization still needs volunteers like you to keep the animals healthy and happy. There are typically ways you can feel fulfillment from helping out without ever touching an animal, like seeing and knowing that they will have clean enclosures and linens to sleep on, or watching them enjoy treats or toys that you created.*
- *Working with live animals is a demanding job—staff members often work long hours and the work can be taxing both physically and emotionally. When working with staff at an organization, it's important to keep this in mind. That being said, most of these professionals also love to share their enthusiasm for helping animals, and want to answer your questions and make your experience worthwhile and meaningful. So, don't be afraid to ask questions and learn from them!*
- *For happy, healthy, human volunteers, doing service with live animals might be the highlight of our day—so it can be hard to remember that, especially for animals that are housed at an organization temporarily, life can be scary, confusing, frustrating, and even sad. For animal shelters and rehabs, for example, staff members and volunteers work hard to make animals' experiences as low-stress as possible. For these reasons, there may be some important rules and guidelines in place that you must follow while volunteering. Keeping your voice quiet or walking slowly between places are often ways you can help staffers keep the environment calm and the animals happy.*

- *Safety is the single most important thing that an organization wants to ensure for both you and its animals. You will probably be asked, along with your parent or guardian, to sign a safety agreement prior to volunteering—this is typical and totally normal for volunteering with animals, so it would be less common and also strange for an organization not to have a contract. Staff members will help you understand how to handle and interact with animals safely if that is part of your volunteer job, and you should never hesitate to ask to hear instructions again. If you notice something wrong with you, a fellow volunteer, or any animal while working, always let a staff person know immediately.*





Reflection: Processing the Experience

As we discussed earlier, each day you do service should include the following three parts: *Torah, Avodah, and Reflection*.

This section provides the materials for the following part of that process:

Torah (pre-service)	Avodah (service)	Reflection (post-service)
------------------------	---------------------	------------------------------

Introduction

The experience of service changes us—but it's not always clear in the moment how. The process of reflection allows us to look back on the experience, identify what we might have seen, felt and learned and how our learning might impact our life in the future. Some of us can reflect easily on our own, but others need support and structure for reflection. We need to be asked hard questions that push us to see things in a new light. We need validation and encouragement around some of the difficult issues and feelings that service can bring up. This chapter will provide a variety of possible reflection activities. It includes both shorter reflection activities that you may choose to do after each service experience, as well as broader reflection activities that are better suited for reflecting on the service experience overall at the end.

How to Use This Section

1. After each service experience, take 20-30 minutes and choose one of the reflection activities from the first section to help you reflect on that day's service.
2. After you have completed your project, take an hour to choose a reflection activity from the second section to reflect on your overall experience during the whole project.

Activities for Reflecting on Each Service Experience

Triangle - Square - Circle (5-10 minutes)

Use the “Triangle - Square - Circle” handout in the appendix. In the triangle, write down three important insights, learnings or pieces of information from the experience. In the square, write down a few things from the experience that “square” with your thinking or that you agree with. In the circle, write down anything that is still “circling” in your head or that you have questions about. The activity can then be debriefed by sharing and/or discussing what you wrote in each shape with an adult or peer.

Free Writing or Drawing (5-20 minutes)

Free writing or drawing can be another way in which you can reflect on your experiences. Some questions that might help to spur your written or drawn reflection include:
How was your experience today different from what you expected?

- What did you like/dislike about the experience today?
- What did you learn about the animals and people that you worked with today?
- What learning or growth occurred for you in this experience today, if any?
- Did you feel, smell, hear, or see anything new or unexpected?
- Tell the story of what happened today from the viewpoint of the animals.

Social Media Post (5 minutes)

With permission from your guardian or if you already regularly use your own account, combine words and images to document your service experience on social media. Post a picture, video, and/or a few sentences about what you did or whom you met—**make sure you get permission from the individual or the organization first**. Make sure to let your friends and followers know where you are volunteering and information about how they can get involved. It is great to include a quote of something meaningful that a staff member or other volunteer said.

Tag JIFA, and we'll repost, too!

Storytelling to Family Member (10-15 minutes)

Storytelling can be a great way to process your experience. You could share stories and the meaning you're making from them with a family member after each service experience.



Activities for Reflecting at the End of Your Project

Planning a Blog Post (1 hour)

The process of planning out a blog post can serve as a great tool for reflection on a meaningful experience. Using the template in the appendix, you can sketch out the main ideas for a blog post about your experience and what you're taking away from it. Then, publish your post on your own blog, submit to your synagogue's blog, and/or send to JIFA!

What, So What, Now What (15-30 min)

This activity can be done either as a discussion or as a series of writing prompts, using the template in the appendix. The activity is separated into three parts which build upon one another.

What?: First recall the facts of what you did and describe what happened.

So What?: Next, shift your focus from description to interpretation or analysis. This part focuses on what meaning you took from the experience.

Now What?: Finally, think about this particular situation's place in a bigger picture and its impact on what you might do in the future.

Photo Collage (1-2 hours)

Another way to reflect on and share about your experience is to document each service experience with a picture or two. Once you have completed your entire project, compile your pictures and use captions as a way to make meaning from the experience. You can use a variety of apps to create and share a collage digitally. Just be sure to get the permission of any people you include before photographing them. Tag JIFA, and we'll repost, too!

Conclusion

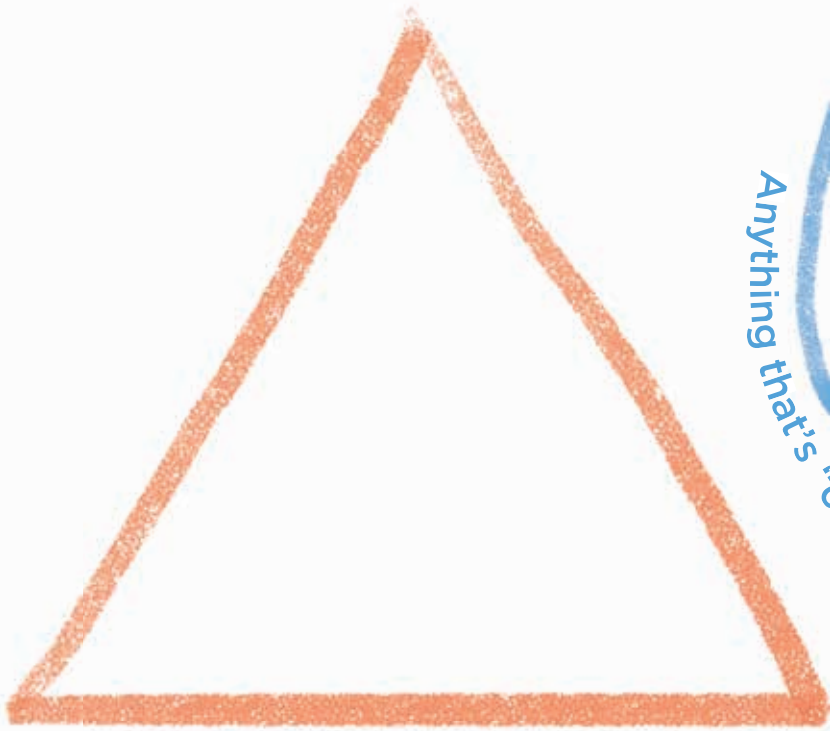
Reflection helps you to make the most of your service experience. Whether you choose to write, draw or talk about your service, reflecting on it make it not just something you do, but something that informs who you are.

Reflection Templates:

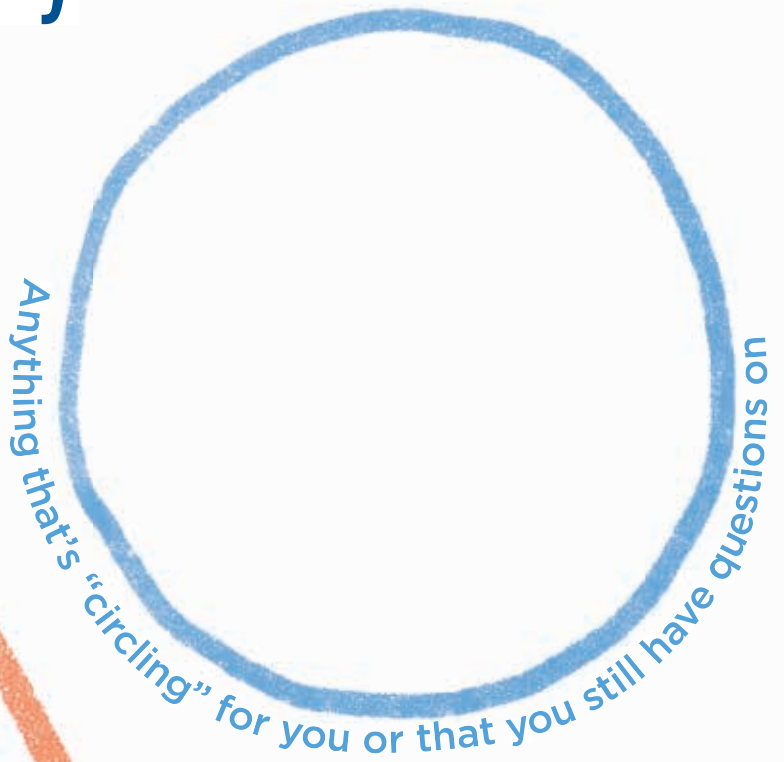
The following pages have sample templates for you to use in your reflections. You may wish to photocopy them or use them directly in the workbook.



Triangle - Square - Circle Reflection Activity



3 insights/learnings



1-2 things that "square" with
your thinking

Blog Post Planning Worksheet

Headline: *Something that will catch people's attention and make them want to read your post*

Photo: *Choose a photo from your service experience that expresses the main point of what you're trying to convey in the post and that readers are likely to feel emotionally impacted by.*

Opinion Statement: *What is the main thing you want readers to take away from reading your post? What was the most important or meaningful thing that you learned as part of your project?*

Reason/Story #1: *What experience led you to learn this lesson? The more that the story triggers an emotional response in your reader, the more likely they are to keep reading.*

Reason/Story #2: *What other experiences did you have that supported this learning?*

Your Action Step: *What are you planning to do with what you learned? How will it impact your life or decisions moving forward?*

Conclusion/Influencing Your Readers: *What do you want to leave your readers with? What's the key thing you want them to leave thinking about? Is there something you want them to do based on what you learned?*

So What?

- *Did you learn new information or a skill, or clarify an interest?*
- *Did you hear, smell, or feel anything notable, or that surprised you?*
- *How was your experience different from what you expected?*
- *What did you like/dislike about the experience?*
- *What did you learn about the animals and people you worked with?*
- *What are some of the pressing needs/issues for these animals?*
- *How did this experience address those needs?*





Hazon/Teva

Sharing Your Story and Educating Others

Each time you serve, you may choose to do some learning, the service itself and reflect on the experience afterwards. When you're nearing the end of your time working with your organization, in addition to reflecting on the experience as a whole using the activities at the end of the previous chapter, you'll also want to think about how you can share the full story of your service-learning experience as a tool to educate your community—either on the day of your bar/bat mitzvah or at another time.

There are many ways that you can choose to share your story and educate others about the work that you did for your bar/bat mitzvah service-learning project. Below and on the next few pages are some possible ideas.

Sharing with Your Community

- *Create a slideshow with pictures and captions from your experience with some introductory and concluding text that share your big picture reflections on the experience overall*
- *Create a poster board to display in your synagogue that includes some pictures, some written reflections on the experiences and some information about the issue that you were working on*
- *Create a skit to perform on your own or with peers that shares important information about the issue you worked on and lessons that you learned with your community*
- *Write and publish the blog post that you sketched out during the reflection activity in the previous chapter. Email it to friends and family, especially those that are looking forward to joining you at your bar/bat mitzvah.*

Connecting Your Experience to “The Big Day”

- *Work with your parent or tutor to figure out how best to include information about the issue you worked on and what you learned from the experience in your d’var torah on the day of your bar/bat mitzvah*
- *Instead of or in addition to your d’var torah, lead and moderate a text study or group conversation among the congregants that attend services on the day of your bar/bat mitzvah. You can even use the resources from the Torah section in this workbook to plan the discussion!*
- *Create centerpieces for your bar/bat mitzvah celebration that share information or reflections on your project service. These could be photos of you during your service, a framed poem you wrote about the experience, artwork that you created around a favorite Jewish quote about compassion for animals. Bonus: design centerpieces out of items that can be donated to the organizations you worked with (such as toys for animals)*
- *Have the food for your celebration reflect the value of extending compassion to all animals, including farm animals, by serving plant-based/vegan options or animal products that are ethically sourced*
- *Request that your guests donate money to the organization that you served with or other organizations promoting animal welfare, as an alternative to gifts or money*

Sharing with JIFA

- *Send pictures, blog posts, videos or copies of your speeches/divrei torah to us at info@jewishinitiativeforanimals.org. We will highlight your work on social media and on our website. The more examples of meaningful projects we have on our page, the more individuals will be inspired to help animals!*
- *Tag JIFA in social media posts about your project and experience.*

However you choose to do it, take the opportunity to share your new knowledge and learnings with those in your community.





What's Next?



You've done your service-learning project, you've shared your learning with your community, you've celebrated your bar/bat mitzvah, but you're still really interested in the issues you worked on during your project, so what do you do?

Finishing your required service-learning project commitment can be just the beginning of a lifetime of service and engagement in animal welfare issues. There are many ways that you can continue to take action on animal welfare—and to do it from a Jewish perspective. Some opportunities to do this are:

- *Using the template in the appendix, make a personal commitment to continue caring for animals*
- *Continue to do service with the organization that you worked with for your project and encourage friends and others from your Jewish community to join you*
- *Find another organization doing work on animal welfare that speaks to you and serve with them*
- *Using the information you learned during your project to influence your Jewish community's policies around food for Shabbat, holidays, and simchas:*
 - ***A holiday or joyful celebration should showcase your values! Establishing a food policy that highlights animal welfare as a Jewish value is the best way for your community to make an impact in favor of animals. Visit JIFA's website and click on "Become a JIFA fellow" for detailed information on how to establish a policy in collaboration with your rabbi, ritual committee, green team, or social action club. You'll get tips on how to write the policy, a buying guide, as well as personalized support for setting up and maintaining the new standards.***
- *Learn about animal protection organizations like Farm Forward, the Humane Society of the United States, and other leading groups that are working to change local or national policies related to animal welfare and how you might be able to support that work.*
- *Do more research on the issue through watching movies, reading articles and books and talking to people who are active on the issue. We suggest looking at the Suggested Resources in the appendix as a starting point.*
- *Coordinate an opportunity for further learning on the issue in your Jewish community by bringing a speaker in who's an expert on the issue or by showing a movie about the topic and facilitating conversation about it afterwards*

- *Work with your teachers or Hebrew school staff to plan a time to talk to students just beginning to think about their service-learning project to share your experience and encourage them to do a project working with animals as well*

In addition to the types of actions included above, you can also continue engaging Jewishly in issues related to animal welfare by making animal related rituals part of your Jewish life. Connecting our love of animals with the rhythms of the Jewish calendar is a beautiful way to make public our appreciation of animals to everyone in our community and to continue to engage with these issues well beyond the bar/bat mitzvah experience. One specific way to do this is by celebrating the “Birthday of Animals.”

- *You’ve probably celebrated Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year that we call the birthday of the world and include as part of our high holy days. You may have also heard of Tu Bishvat, or the “birthday” of the trees, which falls in the Hebrew month of Sh’vat when plants are starting to bloom in the land of Israel. But did you know that there is a Rosh Hashanah—a “birthday”—for animals? This holiday was created as part of the Jewish calendar over 2000 years ago and has recently been revived. **In the Appendix you will find several resources for ways that you can celebrate the “Birthday of Animals.”***

Conclusion

In conclusion, we first want to congratulate you on becoming a bar/bat mitzvah, as well as on the commitment to caring for animals that your service-learning project demonstrated. We hope that your project was just the beginning of a lifetime of service. We encourage you to continue taking action to care for animals and repair our world and hope that you’ll consider getting involved with JIFA as one way to do that.





Appendices



Introduction for Adult Project Mentors

Parents and educators serve a critical role in ensuring that their students identify a service-learning project that resonates with them, successfully complete the project and gain a maximal amount of learning and meaning from the experience.

Below is some information about this process and some succinct tips on how to be the best support to your student(s) during their service-learning project experience. We also strongly suggest that you read through all of the student parts of the guide, both so you know the materials that your student will be using and because they include valuable information not included below.

Why do service-learning as part of the b'nai mitzvah experience?

The b'nai mitzvah process and ceremony marks the coming of age of young people in the Jewish community. Doing service as part of the b'nai mitzvah experience is an opportunity for students to consider their responsibilities to their community and the world around them and how they want to pursue those responsibilities as adult Jews.

*As young people who are passionate about animals, students may already feel, instinctively, that we should treat animals with respect, reverence, and responsibility. As sentient beings who share our world, animals also benefit from human acts of loving kindness. The concept of preventing unnecessary harm to animals and treating them with compassion, or *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*, is actually a law of Torah rooted deeply in Jewish values and tradition. Students will have an opportunity to explore perspectives on this value—and ways they can apply it in their project and beyond—as part of this workbook.*

Why do service-learning with animals?

Children are often drawn to animals instinctively and feel passionately about them. Learning to care for animals and respond to their experiences with empathy is also an important way for students to build those muscles of empathy that they will hopefully

apply to animal protection and other kinds of justice work with humans in the future. In addition, the concept of preventing unnecessary harm to animals and treating them with compassion, or tza'ar ba'alei chayim, is actually a law of Torah rooted deeply in Jewish values and tradition. Students will get to explore perspectives on this value—and ways they can apply it in their project and beyond—as part of this workbook.

What's the difference between volunteering and service-learning?

Volunteering is when you donate your time, energy and skills in a way that benefits something outside yourself and your family. In the context of animals, volunteering may happen with individual animals, groups of animals or living communities as a whole. Examples of volunteering might include running a collection of pet food for animal shelters or for donation to food banks (for low-income families with companion animals (pets)). Students might also organize a litter pick-up at a local park or beach to protect wildlife, or build enrichment tools (toys, housing, etc.) for farm animals living in community farms or sanctuaries.

So how is service-learning different?

Service-learning combines meaningful service with contextualized study and opportunities for structured and/or unstructured reflection. Meaningful service should entail the identification of a genuine need, and the creation of a project that responds to that need. Service-learning utilizes the service as a tool to advance students' knowledge about a particular issue, explore their personal values and deepen their connection with one another, the animals with whom they're serving, and their communities. In contrast to volunteerism, service-learning's objective is to benefit the service participants equally - both the providers and recipients of the service benefit from the project. The recipients get the benefit of whatever service is done, while the providers of the service gain a deeper understanding of the issue that they were serving on, familiarity with a new organization or community and a deeper connection with themselves.

In a Jewish context, service-learning also seeks to draw connections between the service that is being done and Jewish wisdom, in order to help participants identify ways that their service might enrich their understanding of Judaism and their own Jewish identity. In short, Jewish service-learning, especially this workbook, seeks to support young people in finding a project that matches their passions, provides an opportunity for meaningful service and learning and that connects to Jewish values in an organic way that adds value to the experience.

Helping your student pick their animal-themed project

We are all most likely to see through projects that we are invested in and which hold meaning for us. To help your student consider what type of project might resonate with them, try discussing the following questions together:

Need

- *What issues affect the community?*
- *In an ideal world, what is needed?*
- *What needs are animal welfare organizations saying exist?*
- *How can your student contribute towards a solution?*
- *Is there an innovative solution that your student might be able to design WITH an organization, given their connections/resources and the organization's need?*

Passion

- *What kinds of things do they love to do?*
- *What animals are they most passionate about?*
- *What issue(s) make them most angry?*

Skill

- *What kinds of skills do they have that might be useful in these types of service projects?*
- *What kinds of skill are they interested in learning that they might be able to learn through a project?*

Logistics

- *What is logistically feasible for our family?*
- *How often could the student serve?*
- *On what days and hours would they be available to volunteer?*
- *For how long do they want to serve?*
- *What locations would be possible for a project?*

Framing the Project

Successful service-learning projects have 3 key components which can be summed up as Torah, Avodah and Reflection. The workbook is laid out in a way for you to easily help create this structure for your students as they plan their project.

1. TORAH: Understanding Jewish Wisdom on the Issue

While the act of service is, in itself, meaningful, we increase its meaning when we use it as an opportunity to both learn more about our world and about Jewish tradition. Once your student has chosen their project, you can sit down together and do some research about the broader animal issue related to the service they'll be doing. If they'll be volunteering to care for animals on a Jewish community farm, you could learn about what Judaism has to say about keeping, raising, and slaughtering domesticated animals for food and fiber. To relate this to a broader contemporary concern, you'll want to find out everything you can about the complex and difficult realities of today's industrial farms and the many animals that are affected in this system. If they'll be doing a project related to companion animals, you could find out more about pet overpopulation, and do research into companion animal behavior and how to keep them humanely.

In addition to understanding the broader issues related to your student's service, you can also explore what Jewish tradition has to say about that particular issue. Jewish voices throughout history have many interesting things to say about the human-animal relationship and bond, and contemporary leaders even address relatively recent dilemmas such as factory farming, threats to wildlife, and animal research and testing.

You and your student may also want to think about a list of questions that they want to ask the professionals with whom they volunteer that might give them further insight into the animals and their experience. These questions might include questions about the background of the particular animals they are working with and some of their habits, information about how staff come to work at that organization and what their training is, as well as questions about how the organization deals with various issues that arise with the animals such as sickness.

Some resources for all of these types of learning are included in the workbook.

2. AVODAH: Serving with your student

Instilling a commitment to service and tikkun olam is partially about exposing students to opportunities for service and encouraging them to participate, but it's also about leading by example. Serving with your student can be a great opportunity to not only role model this commitment to service, but also to spend time together and learn more about them and the things they care about. In addition, many organization may require adult supervision for minors to volunteer.

3. REFLECTION: Supporting your student's processing of the service

The final two steps of effective service-learning are reflection and identifying "what's next." After each service opportunity that your student engages in, you can use the materials in the workbook to process the experience and help them distill what they learned from it. Once the project is complete or nearing completion, you can use the materials in the workbook to reflect on the experience as a whole and to help them consider how they might want to continue to engage in this issue beyond the completion of their service-learning project.

We suggest that each time your student serves over the course of their project that they undertake some Jewish learning beforehand, complete a day of service, and then engage in a reflection activity to bring it all together.

Connecting the Service Project to Their Bar or Bat Mitzvah Celebration

The "Sharing Your Story and Educating Others" section of the workbook has a variety of creative ways to connect the themes of the service project with the day of the student's celebration. Whether your student chooses to make centerpieces later donated to the organization, have a photo gallery with highlights from the project, or even speak about the experience from the bima, bringing the values and lessons learned from the experience is a meaningful way to share about the project and align the experience with their coming of age ceremony.

Sample Topics

Factory Farming

Introduction

Our food production system affects the most animals in human care per year - nearly 10 billion in the US and 56 billion worldwide (and that's not including fish and other sea creatures). The majority of kosher animals are raised in the same factory farm conditions in which most other farmed animals are raised. The US's federal animal protection law, or the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), requires companies and federal agencies to ensure some protection for many kinds of animals in human care, but most farmed animals have no protections at all.

Subtopics for further exploration:

- *History of farming in the US*
- *Hybrid breeding of farmed animals*
- *Welfare certifications*
- *Common practices like antibiotics and extreme confinement*
- *Climate change and meat reduction*
- *Kosher and conventional slaughter in the US*

Wildlife and Conservation

Introduction

The largest threats to wildlife on earth are habitat destruction, poaching, and invasive species, along with the rising dangers of climate change. The loss of more and more habitat due to building by humans, deforestation, agriculture, and pollution leaves many animals unable to survive. Some are calling this period of time the next great extinction event because species are disappearing at such an alarming rate. Without healthy natural spaces that nurture many species, human survival is also at stake.

Subtopics for further exploration:

- *Endangered species and keystone species*
- *Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation*
- *Wildlife trafficking (illegal trade in wildlife and their parts and products)*
- *Exotic and illegal pets*
- *Human-wildlife conflict*
- *Protecting urban wildlife*
- *Regulation of wildlife sanctuaries*

Pet Overpopulation

Introduction

Companion animals (pets) are becoming more and more common. Nearly 70% of US households have at least one. As having companion animals has grown in popularity, overpopulation has also increased, leading to the creation of animal shelters for dogs, cats, and other animals. Cruelty laws exist in most states to protect companion animals from abuse by humans, and these laws are enforced on a state-by-state basis.

Subtopics for further exploration:

- *History of animal shelters*
- *Spay/neuter programs and TNR (trap-neuter-release)*
- *Euthanasia rates*
- *Adoption and rescue*
- *Caring for companion animals*
- *Commercial breeding*
- *Puppy mills*
- *Community/feral cats*

Animal Testing

Introduction

There is a long history of animals used in education, research, and testing. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, with the expansion of medical research and product safety testing, the use of animals in experiments also grew steadily. The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) affords some protections for certain species used in research, and others are left out entirely. Rats, mice, and birds bred for research, who together make up 90-95% of animals in laboratories, are not protected.

Subtopics for further exploration:

- *History of animal experimentation*
- *History of anti-vivisection (opposing use of animals in testing)*
- *Finding cruelty-free products*
- *Alternatives to animal testing and use in education*
- *Rescue and sanctuary for retired animals*
- *Dissection and animals used in education*

Index of Jewish Sources

Written Torah

Torah (Teaching)

Genesis (Bereishit)
ch. 1, 2, and 9 (p. 80-81)

Exodus (Shemot)
ch. 20 and 23
(p. 54, 62, 122-123)

Leviticus (Yayikra)
ch. 11, 22, and 25
(p. 81, 92, 104, 123)

Numbers (Bamidbar)
ch. 11 (p. 81)

Deuteronomy (Devarim)
ch. 3, 11, 12, 22, and 25
(p. 53, 62, 82,
92, 102, 186)

Nevi'im (Prophets)

Isaiah (Yeshayahu)
ch. 11 (p. 82)

Ketuvim (Writings)

Proverbs (Mishlei)
ch. 6, 12, 25, 30
(p. 72, 74, 100, 134, 185)

Ecclesiastes (Kohelet)
ch. 3 (p. 134)

Collectively known by its acronym, TaNaKh, the Hebrew Bible is the canonical collection of 24 works composed by Hebrew speakers in the first millennium BCE, a record of community legends, diet and lifeways, origin myths, historical chronicles, prophetic accounts, moral teachings, religious ritual and secular legal traditions witnessing the culture of ancient Israel.

The core of the TaNaKh is the Torah, also called the five books of Moses (Moshe in Hebrew) — a reference to the legend of its origin as the principal teaching of God as taught to Moshe and transmitted to the Israelite tribes before they established themselves as a people in the hill country of the ancient land of Cana'an in the late 2nd millennium BCE. The earliest audience of the text of the Torah were both herders and farmers, and their world was deeply ordered by the seasons of the agricultural calendar and the needs of the domesticated animals and plants they depended upon to grow and thrive as a culture and as a people.

In rabbinic Judaism, the TaNaKh is also referred to as torah shebikhtav (the Torah transmitted through writings) to distinguish it from the torah shebe'al peh (the Torah transmitted through speaking and listening) or oral Torah. Schools of thought emerged in Antiquity for understanding and interpreting Torah and for preserving teachings and beliefs. Such an oral (and aural) Torah relied on a vibrant intellectual culture in order for teachings to be preserved generation to generation. In the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple, that culture was nearly destroyed, but in the course of reconstituting itself the oral Torah of the rabbinic Jewish tradition began to be written down by the rabbis of the 2nd century CE.

Mishnaic works

Mishna Moed Rosh Hashana
1: 1 (p. 196)

Mishna Avot (Pirkei Avot)
2:16 (p. 18)

Mishna, Chullin 1:1-2 (p. 90)

Tosefta, Chullin 1:1 (p. 92)

Sifrei Devarim:
Piska 306 (p. 113)

Midrash

Genesis Rabbah 10
(p.47, 48, 104)

Exodus Rabbah 2:2 (p. 56)

Ecclesiastes Rabbah
7:13 (p. 102)

Midrash Tanchuma
(S. Buber) *Noach 6, 9,*
and 10 (p. 46, 55, 133)

Yalkut Shimoni on
Psalms (p. 185)

Alphabet of Ben
Sira, on Spiders and
Wasps (p. 186-187)

Oral Torah

The Mishna, Tosefta, Sifra, and Sifri are some of the earliest compilations of the rabbinic Jewish tradition. They contain, for the most part, a secular and religious legal system describing how Judaism was practiced and could remain practiced in an age without a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. Non-legal works rich with creative interpretations of the stories and teachings in the TaNaKh were also collected. The largest collection of Midrashim is called the Midrash Rabbah and contains midrashim on the five books of the Torah (Chumash, a/k/a Pentateuch) and the Megillot, and were composed sometime between the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE.

Midrash (pl. midrashim), generally refers to a genre of rabbinic Jewish commentary on the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) containing interpretations that are not explicit in any plain reading of the text. While some of these reading may be based on particular methods posited by various rabbinic schools for deriving Jewish law (midrash halakha), other midrashim expanded upon the stories found in the Tanakh or even recorded ancient oral traditions only obliquely referenced in its texts (midrash aggadah). Both forms of midrash remain an invaluable font of the beliefs and values found at the core of rabbinic Jewish tradition not necessarily emphasized or referred to in later medieval codes of Jewish law like the Shulchan Arukh. Collections of midrashim were being published even into the medieval period with some being lost to history and others only surviving as fragments found in medieval rabbinic commentaries. For example, the Yalkut Shimoni is a compilation of midrash aggadah on the Tanakh compiled in the 11th century by Rabbi Simeon Kara containing traditions from Jewish writings in Antiquity not included in the Hebrew Bible. Midrash became a creative genre expansive enough to contain fantastical and even satirical works, as with the Alphabet of Ben Sira, probably composed in an Arabic speaking land in the 8th century.

Jerusalem Talmud

Ketubot 4:8 (p. 56)

Babylonian Talmud

Berachot 40a (p. 53-54)

Shabbat 128b (p. 63)

Eruvin 100b (p. 72, 74)

Sanhedrin 59b (p. 80)

Chullin 84a (p. 84)

Pesachim 49b (p. 85)

Bava Metzia 85a (p. 184)

As generations passed and new schools were founded inside and outside the historic lands of Israel, new compilations of teachings in halakha and in midrash aggadah were made and founded upon discussions and commentary concerning the teachings recorded in the Mishna and called gemara. The first compilation of discussion over the Mishna was made in the schools surviving in the Land of Israel in the 4th century and became known as the Jerusalem Talmud (or Talmud Yerushalmi).

Building upon this work but also recording their own discussions were compilations of gemara produced by the schools established in Babylonia in the 5th century.

Liturgy

In addition to the Mishna and Aggadah, other writings were also being produced whose purpose today isn't exactly certain but which may have been liturgical or mystical. One of these works, dating from the 5th or 6th century CE is called the Perek Shirah or Chapter of Song, the song being a list of verses from the Tanakh with each verse given over to be sung by an animal or other part of creation. (p. 184-185)

Medieval Thinkers

Rabbi Shlomo Yitschaki (a/k/a RASHI, Troyes, France, 1040-1105 CE) became the pre-eminent commentator of the new schools of rabbinic Judaism established far west from Babylonia — in what is now France. Rashi wrote commentaries on both the Torah and the Talmud. In this workbook we quote Rashi's commentary on Eruvin 100b. (p. 72, 74)

As the vast corpus of Jewish teachings in the Talmud lacked any systematic organization, legal scholars such as Moshe ben Maimon (a/k/a RAMBAM or Maimonides, 1135-1204 CE, Egypt) began reorganizing established legal teachings in logical codes. Rambam became well known through his work the Mishneh Torah written in Hebrew and intended for the public, but he also wrote private correspondence in Arabic intended for his students: Moreh Nevukhim (Guide of the Perplexed). (p. 46 and 95)

Rabbi Yehudah HeChasid (1150-1217 CE) was the founder of a yeshiva in Regensburg and a leader of the Chasidei Ashkenaz, a mystical movement among the Jews settled in what was then the Holy Roman Empire (now Germany). In this workbook we quote his writing in Sefer Chasidim (The Book of the Pious), Section 44. The book contains ethical, ascetic, and mystical sentences, intermingled with elements of German popular belief.

Rabbi Yosef Caro (1488-1575 CE) was a mystic and master of Jewish law. He authored the authoritative code of halakhah known as the Shulchan Arukh. Here we quote Rabbi Caro from the section of the Shulchan Arukh called Yoreh Deah (23) concerning laws of kashrut. Following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, Rabbi Caro fled with his family at a very young age to Portugal, and from there to the Ottoman Empire, eventually settling in Safed in what is now northern Israel. (see p. 90)

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1522-1570 CE), also known by his acronym, RAMAK, was a student of Rabbi Caro and a central figure in the historical development of Kabbalah, leader of a school in 16th-century Safed. Influenced by the earlier success of Jewish philosophy in articulating a rational study of Jewish thought, Moshe Cordovero produced the first full integration of the previous differing schools in Kabbalistic interpretation. In his work, Tomer Devorah (“Palm Tree of Deborah”), he utilizes the Kabbalistic concepts of the ten divine attributes of creation known as the Sephirot to illuminate a system of morals and ethics. (See p. 47)

Rabbi Elazar ben Moshe Azikri (1533-1600 CE) was a Jewish kabbalist, poet and writer, born in Safed to a Sephardic family who had settled in the Land of Israel after the expulsion from Spain. Rabbi Elazar studied Torah under Rabbi Yosef Sagis and Rabbi Jacob Berab, and is counted with the greatest Rabbis and intellectuals of his time: Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz, Yosef Caro, Moshe Cordovero, Isaac Luria, Israel Najara, etc. The Piyyut (liturgical poem) Yedid Nefesh was composed by Rabbi Elazar. Rabbi Elazar’s Book, the Sefer Charedim, printed after his death in 1600, is considered as one of the main books of Jewish deontology (the study of duty and obligation). (See p. 55 for Sefer Charedim 14:1)

Rabbi Yisroel ben Eliezer Baal Shem (1700-1760 CE), otherwise known as the Baal Shem Tov, was the founder of the Chassidic movement in an area of Poland now part of southwestern Ukraine. While he left no writings of his own, his oral teachings were recorded and collected by his students and later published. On page 47 we relate teachings from the work Tsava’as HaRiVaSH #12 and on page 93 from the 20th century Jewish storyteller, Shmuel Yosef Agnon (1888-1970) from his short story, “Tears” in A Book That Was Lost and Other Stories by S.Y. Agnon (Schocken Books, 1995).



Suggested Resources

Animal Welfare Organizations (listed alphabetically)

Animal Equality

Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF)

Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)

Anonymous for Animal Rights (Israeli)

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)

Compassion Over Killing (COK)

Farm Forward

Mercy for Animals (MFA)

National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS)

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

The Humane League (THL)

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

Service-Learning and Animals

[ASPCA Resources](#)

[The Humane Society of the United States Resources](#)

Jewish Resources

[Hazon](#)

- [Hazon Food Guide \(2016\)](#)

Animal Stories

Ancient Stories

The Calf and Yehuda HaNasi:

A calf being lead to shechita [Jewish religious slaughter] broke away, hid its head in the folds of Rabbi's garment, and wept. He said to it: "Go. For this you were created." [The heavenly court] said [in response]: "Since he had no compassion, let him face sufferings." Rabbi was afflicted with a stone in the urinary tract and thrush for thirteen years. One day Rabbi's female servant was sweeping the house. Some infant rodents were scattered [from their nest], and she swept them up. He said to her: "Let them go. As it is written: 'His compassion is over all His works'" (Psalms 145:9). They said: "Because he was compassionate, let us be compassionate to him." And he was cured.

(from Talmud Bavli, Bava Metzia 85a)

דההוא עגלא דהו קא ממטו ליה
לשחיטה אזל תליא לרישיה בכנפיה
דרבי וקא בכי אמר ליה זיל לכך
נוצרת אמרי הואיל ולא קא מרחם
ליתו עליה יסורין;
וע"י מעשה הלכו יומא חד הוה קא
כנשא אמתיה דרבי ביתא הוה שדיא
בני כרכושתא וקא כנשא להו אמר
לה שבקינהו כתיב (תהלים קמה, ט)
וְרַחֲמֵי עַל-כָּל-מַעֲשָׂיו
אמרי הואיל ומרחם נרחם עליה

From the introduction to Perek Shirah:

The Sages said concerning King David that when he completed the book of Psalms, he became proud. He said before the blessed Holy One, "Is there any creature You have created in Your world that says more songs and praises than I?" At that moment a frog happened across his path, and it said to him: David! Do not become proud, for I recite more songs and praises than you. Furthermore, every song I say contains three thousand parables, as it says, "And he spoke three thousand parables, and his songs were one thousand five hundred" (from 1 Kings 5:12). And furthermore, I am busy with a great mitzvah, and this is the mitzvah with which I am busy - there is a certain type of creature by the edge of the sea whose sustenance is entirely from [creatures living in] the water, and when it is hungry, it takes me and eats me, such that I fulfill that which it says, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for you shall heap coals of fire on his head, and God shall reward you" (from Proverbs 25:21-22); do not read "shall reward you" but instead "shall make him complete you."

(from the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni, end of Psalms)

אָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ ז"ל עַל דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ
ע"ה בְּשָׁעָה שְׁסִיִּים סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים זָחָה
דַּעַתּוֹ עָלָיו. אָמַר לִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ
הוּא "יֵשׁ בְּרִיאָה שֶׁבְּרֵאתָ בְּעוֹלָמְךָ
שְׂאוּמֶרֶת שִׁירוֹת וְתִשְׁבַּחוֹת יוֹתֵר
מִמֶּנִּי?" בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה נִזְרַמְנָה לוֹ
צִפְרָדַע אַחַת וְאָמְרָה לוֹ, דָּוִד! אַל תִּזְוֹחַ
דַּעַתְךָ עָלֶיךָ, שְׂאֲנִי אוֹמֶרֶת שִׁירוֹת
וְתִשְׁבַּחוֹת יוֹתֵר מִמֶּךָ. וְלֹא עוֹר אֶלָּא
כָּל שִׁירָה שְׂאֲנִי אוֹמֶרֶת מִמְּשָׁלֶת עָלֶיךָ
שְׁלֹשֶׁת אֲלָפִים מְשָׁל שְׂנֵאָמַר
(מַלְכִים א ה:יב) "וַיְדַבֵּר שְׁלֹשֶׁת אֲלָפִים
מְשָׁל וַיְהִי שִׁירוֹ חֲמִשָּׁה וְאַלְף". וְלֹא
עוֹד אֶלָּא שְׂאֲנִי עוֹסֶקֶת בְּמִצְוָה גְּדוּלָּה,
וְזוֹ הִיא הַמִּצְוָה שְׂאֲנִי עוֹסֶקֶת בָּהּ - יֵשׁ
בְּשֵׁפֶת הַיָּם מִיֵּן אֶחָד שְׂאִין פִּרְנָסָתוֹ
כִּי אִם מִן הַיָּם וּבְשָׁעָה שֶׁהוּא רָעֵב
נוֹטֵלֵנִי וְאוֹכְלֵנִי לְקִיּוּם מָה שְׂנֵאָמַר
(מְשָׁלִי כה:כא-כב) "אִם רָעֵב שְׂנֵאָדָּךְ
הֶאֱכִילְהוּ לָחֶם וְאִם צָמָא הִשְׁקֵהוּ מַיִם
כִּי גִחְלִים אֶתָּה חֲתָה עַל רֹאשׁוֹ וַיְהִי הָוָה
יִשְׁלַם לָךְ" אַל תִּקְרִי יִשְׁלַם לָךְ אֶלָּא
יִשְׁלִימָהוּ לָךְ:

ילקוט שמעוני, סוף תהלים

For full Hebrew and English for Perek Shira, visit:
<http://opensiddur.org/perek-shira-chapter-of-song/>

King David and the Spider:

King Nebuchadnezzar asked Ben Sira: "Why has God created in their world wasps and spiders, which only cause harm and do nothing beneficial?"

He said to him, "David, king of Israel, peace be upon him, was once sitting in his garden and saw a wasp and a spider fighting. A fool came with a stick in his hand and separated them. Said David to God: 'Master of the Cosmos! What good comes from these creatures of yours? The wasp eats honey, ravages, and produces no benefit. The spider spins all year but never wears its web. The mindless fool harms other creatures; unaware of your oneness and power, he does nothing beneficial for the world.' God replied, 'David, you deride these creatures! There will come a time when you will need them, and you will understand why they were created.'

When David was hiding in a cave from King Saul, God sent a spider, which spun a web across the cave's opening and closed it. When Saul came, he saw the web and said, 'Surely no one has gone inside; if anyone had, he would have torn the web to pieces.' Saul went away without going inside. When David came out of the cave, he saw the spider and kissed it, saying, 'Blessed be your Creator and blessed be you. "Master of the Cosmos! Who can do according to your works and according to your mighty acts?!" (Deuteronomy 3:24). For all your deeds are fitting.'

אמר נבוכדנאצר המלך לבן-סירא:
"מפני מה הקדוש ברוך הוא ברא
בעולמו צרעין ועכביש, שמפסידין ואין
בהן הנאה?"

אמר לו: פעם אחת היה דוד מלך
ישראל עליו השלום יושב בגנו וראה
צרעה אוכלת עכביש. אמר דוד לפני
הקדוש ברוך הוא: "רבנו של עולם!
מה הנאה באלו שבראת בעולמך?
צרעה אוכלת דבש ומשחתת ואין בה
הנאה ועכביש יארוג כל השנה ולא
ילבשנו!" אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא:
"דוד. מלעיג אתה על הבריות? תבוא
שעה ותצטרך להן ותדע למה נבראו!"

וכשנחבא דוד במערה מפני שאול
המלך, שלח הקדוש ברוך הוא עכביש
וארג על פי המערה וסגר אותו. בא
שאול וראה פי המערה ארוג. אמר:
"בודאי לא נכנס אדם הנה, שאם
נכנס היה קרוע הארוג לקרעים."
והלך ולא נכנס לשם. וכשיצא דוד
וראה העכביש, נשקו ואמר לו: "ברוך
בוראך וברוך אתה! רבנו של עולם,
מי יַעֲשֶׂה כַּמַּעֲשִׂיךָ וְכַגְבוּרֹתֶיךָ (דברים
ג:כד), שכל מעשיך נאים!"

And in the presence of Achish, David pretended he was crazy. Achish's own daughter happened to be a mad fool. When the courtiers brought David to Achish, he said: 'You mock me! You have brought this one to me because my daughter is a fool. Don't I already have enough madmen?!' They immediately released David. He fled and thanked God for God's handiwork, saying, 'There is benefit in everything that God created in the world.'

When David found Saul resting at noon, Abner was lying at one entrance to the barricade with his head at the other entrance and his legs lifted high. David came, entered between his legs, and took a cruse of water. But when he wanted to exit, Abner stretched his legs and covered the entrance with them. They appeared to David as two large pillars, and he prayed to God, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Psalms 22:2). Right there God performed a miracle for him, sending a wasp, which stung Abner in his legs so he straightened them. David came out and praised God.

So, you see, it is not proper for a man to deride God's works."

(from the Alphabet of Ben Sira, translated in Rabbinic Fantasies, edited by Daid Stern and Mark J. Mirksy, Yale University Press, 1990)

ולפני אכיש עשה עצמו שוטה לפני אנשיו והיתה בת אכיש שוטה ומשוגעת, כיון שהביאוהו אליו אמר להם מלעיגים אתם אותי בשביל בתי שהיא שוטה הבאתם זה אלי, או שמא חסר משוגעים אני. מיד הניחוהו וברח והודה לאל על מעשיו, שכל מה שברא בעולם יש בו הנאה.

ובזמן שמצא דוד לשאול שוכב בצהריים, והיה אבנר שוכב בפתח האוהל, והיו רגליו זקופות; בא דוד ונכנס בין רגליו, ונטל צפחת המים. וכשבא לצאת מבין רגליו, פשט אבנר רגליו וכיסהו והיו עליו כשני עמודים גדולים. וביקש רחמים מיי ואמר: (תהלים כב:) 'אֵלֵי אֵלֵי לָמָּה עֲזַבְתָּנִי' באותה שעה עשה לו הקדוש ברוך הוא נס ושלח לו צרעה ועקצה רגלי אבנר וזקפן, ויצא דוד ושיבח להקדוש ברוך הוא.

ולא ראוי לבן אדם להלעיג במעשה אל.

Contemporary Stories

Whatever Happened to Shirley and Jenny?

(The continued story of The Urban Elephant, a PBS documentary)

In 2000, The Urban Elephant brought viewers the touching story of Shirley and Jenny, two crippled elephants reunited at The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee after a 22-year separation. The bonding was immediate, intense and unforgettable between the two former circus elephants. But long after the cameras were turned off, the wondrous moments would continue.

The two were inseparable. Shirley quickly assumed the role of surrogate mother to Jenny, who, though now an adult, had been a baby when they first met at the circus. Their bond was so intense, it would forever change life at the sanctuary. As Carol Buckley, Executive Director of the Sanctuary describes it, 'that was the love that started our elephant family.' "After Shirley's arrival, elephants who had previously been companions and friends were now sisters and aunts in the mother and daughter relationship of Shirley and Jenny. They gave the sanctuary its future," says Carol. These strong bonds would soon be needed. Sadly, on October 17, 2006, ten years after arriving at the sanctuary, Jenny died.

Jenny came to the sanctuary quite ill. She had scars and other traces of misuse and abuse from her past as a circus elephant. She had been exposed to tuberculosis. And due to an attack by a bull elephant before coming to the sanctuary, Jenny had a crippled back leg. Her caregivers suspect the leg harbored a hidden bacterial infection that flared up last year.

Carol says the bond between Shirley and Jenny was never more touching than in the last days of Jenny's life. "The day before she died, Jenny had been down and she wouldn't get up. Shirley stood by her and insisted that Jenny get up. Jenny just couldn't get up. Then Jenny stood up but she had to lean on Shirley to keep up. If you looked at Shirley's face, you could see that she knew that Jenny was dying. Jenny dropped to the ground and Shirley walked into the woods."

Jenny was on her deathbed when Shirley walked to the woods but she would give Carol and the sanctuary caregivers the privilege of one last incredible glimpse into the world of elephants before she died. "After Shirley left, Jenny started to make this rumbling noise. With each exhalation, she would rumble. It was almost like a singing. As Jenny did this, Bunny and Tara (two sanctuary elephants) came running over. We thought that was it and she was going to die. And then Bunny and Tara started trumpeting and rumbling. At a

certain point, I turned to Scott (Director of The Elephant Sanctuary) and I asked him how long this was going on. He said 58 minutes! Well, she continued for another two hours. Jenny lived through the night and was even perky and silly. She passed in the morning. And when she died, she did a vocalization that I had never heard. It was like a trumpet. It was very low and got quieter and quieter. She passed very peacefully without straining or exerting herself. To experience this ritual was amazing. I had never seen anything like it.” Shirley stayed in the woods until Jenny passed. She didn’t eat for two days. “It was very hard and especially hard on Shirley. Shirley’s whole life was about taking care of baby Jenny. It was like a mom losing her baby.”

Fortunately, Shirley has had some extended family members to lean on during the sad times. Shirley is very close with an elephant named Bunny — the two are like sisters. Bunny arrived to the sanctuary just two months after Shirley and they bonded instantly. Carol says Jenny’s death was difficult for the elephants but they are recovering. The healing process may have been sped up by a new elephant, Misty, who has come in from a different area of the sanctuary. “She’s a very happy creature. She loves all elephants. She just runs around. And they love her. She’s a ball of happy energy.”



The Cow Who Saved Herself

BY MICHAEL RYAN

Emily knew that danger was near. She had never been in a place like this before—a little shed with a 5-foot gate behind her. All of her companions had gone through the swinging doors in front of her, and not one had returned. The men who had locked the gate at Frank Arena's slaughterhouse in Hopkinton, Mass., were now off having lunch. Emily saw her chance, and she took it. When she made her move, jaws dropped and workers stared in amazement. Suddenly, Emily— all 1400 pounds of her—was airborne, sailing over the gate.” A cow just can't do that” Meg Randa told me. As residents of this rural area west of Boston were to discover,



Emily with her new family: Lewis Randa (L), his wife, Meg, and their children, Christopher, Abbey and Mikey (L-R). Photo by Stephen Tackeff, Middlesex News

Emily, a 3-year-old Holstein, can do many things cows aren't supposed to do.

Frank Arena and his workers took off after their runaway animal, but she disappeared into the woods and eluded them all day. It was November 1995, the beginning of an odyssey that would capture the imagination of the entire community. Slaughterhouse workers scoured the woods, leaving out boles of hay to entice Emily back into their grasp. She would have none of it.

Instead, people reported seeing her running with a herd of deer, leaning from them how to forage in the wood. Soon the local paper was running updates on Emily sightings. Meg Randa read the first one. "The wheels started turning," she told me. "I said, 'There's got to be some way we can purchase her and let her live in peace.'" We were in the former town hull in Sherbom, Mass., near Hopkinton. Meg and her husband, Lewis, bought the building 12 years ago. Here, they run a

school for children with special needs. Devout Quakers, they also operate the Peace Abbey, where seminars and conferences on peace have attracted participants like Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama. Surely, if they could bring the Dalai Lama to a little farm town in New England, they could do something for a desperate cow.

The Randas had hundreds of co-conspirators. Emily sightings suddenly dried up—it seemed that nobody wanted to see her captured. Local farmers started leaving out bales of hay for her to eat.

Meg called Frank Arena at the slaughterhouse and was touched by his willingness to help. His granddaughter, Angela, had given Emily her name, and even Frank (who died unexpectedly in January) seemed impressed by her pluck. At first he offered to let the Randas have Emily for the bargain price of \$350; then, after consulting his granddaughter, he changed the price to \$1. “He liked the idea of Emily being at the school,” Lewis Randa explained.

A blizzard hit, and Emily’s food sources were covered by snow. The Randas and others brought grain, hay and water to places where they thought Emily might be found; the food was eaten after they left, but Emily wasn’t ready to reveal herself.

Finally, one December day after they spread out some food, the Randas saw Emily. “We looked over our shoulder, and she was right there looking at us,” Meg recalled. Emily had lost 500 pounds and needed veterinary treatment after her 40-day ordeal, but the loving care of the students at the school has brought her back to her full weight. And now she has company.

Last December, a neighbor approached the Randas and asked if they could take in a calf that might otherwise be sent to a slaughterhouse. The day I visited, little Gabriel stood patiently while Emily groomed and licked him as fastidiously as any loving mom. They have been joined by a pair of turkeys, a mother goat and her two kids, and three rabbits—all of them rescued from inhumane conditions and all of them now tended by students from the school.

But Emily’s biggest test is yet to come. Ellen Little, producer of 1995’s film *Richard III*, has started work on a film version of Emily’s saga. Emily will not have to leave her happy home for the lights of Hollywood, though. She will be played by another Holstein—and that should give another cow a chance to become a star.

(from *Parade Magazine*, October 1997)

Meet Abandoned Blind Dog and His Trusty Canine Guide Who ‘Acts as His Eyes’

Meet Glenn and Buzz.

Glenn is a blind, medium-sized Jack Russell Terrier, and Buzz is a large Staffordshire Bull Terrier, who acts as Glenn’s trusty guide.

The two were recently discovered abandoned and rescued after found wandering inside a sea tunnel together in Hartlepool, United Kingdom. The pair are currently under the care of rescue organization Stray Aid in Coxhoe.

Glenn and Buzz are now looking for a home, but only if they’re taken in together, Stray Aid volunteer Hannah Critchlow told ABC News today.



“They are inseparable,” said Critchlow, 21. “They instantly had a bond when they came in, so we kept them together. Whenever they’re separated they start crying and barking for each other.”

Buzz leads Glenn during walks, looks after him and constantly keeps him company, Critchlow added.

“They have to stay together,” she said.

The pair are both believed to be about 10 years old, and they were likely abandoned because of their age and Glenn’s condition, Critchlow said.

But the good news is that the rescue organization has received over 20 calls already from interested adopters, she said.

“Some dogs are here months and months and not one person looks at them or has interest, so there’s an unusual amount of interest in them,” Critchlow said. “Everyone is in love with them, and they’re both just so friendly, lovable and very chill.”

Personal Commitment to Animals

Based on my experience doing and reflecting on my service-learning project, I commit to show my ongoing care and concern for animals by valuing the welfare of animals when choosing...

- How to acquire and care for companion animals (pets)*
- What foods I do and do not eat*
- What kinds of entertainment I participate in (i.e. going to the circus)*
- Whether or not to buy an item that is made from or tested on animals*
- Where to give tzedakah (money or other types of donation)*

In addition to the above, I also commit to show my ongoing care and concern for animals by...



Resources for Celebrating the “Birthday of Animals”

According to Jewish tradition, we actually have four dates on the calendar considered a new year. In the same ancient text that offers the dates for the new years mentioned above, we also learn that Rosh Chodesh Elul, exactly one month before Rosh Hashanah, is the New Year’s Day for the Animals (Rosh Hashanah LaBehemot).

Seder Moed: Rosh Hashanah, Chapter 1, Mishnah 1

ראש השנה פרק א משנה א

There are four New Year Days (roshei shanim).

The first of Nissan is the Rosh HaShanah for kings and pilgrimage holidays.

The first of Elul is the Rosh HaShanah for tithing behema. Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Shimon say, “The first of Tishrei.”

The first of Tishrei is the Rosh HaShanah for years, Shmitah, Yovel, for planting, and for vegetables.

The first of Shvat is the Rosh HaShanah for [fruit-bearing] trees, according to Beit Shamai. Beit Hillel says it is on the fifteenth [of the month of Shvat, Tu biShvat].

ארבעה ראשי שנים הם.
באחד בניסן ראה השנה למלכים ולרגלים.
באחד באלול ראש השנה למעשר בהמה. רבי אלעזר ורבי שמעון אומרים, באחד בתשרי.
באחד בתשרי ראש השנה לשנים ולשמטין וליובלות, לנטיעה ולירקות.
באחד בשבט, ראה השנה לאילן, כדברי בית שמאי. בית הלל אומרים, בחמשה עשר בו.

In ancient times, this simply meant the date on the calendar that farmers used to mark the age of their animals—quite similar to the role of Tu biShvat for trees. Though only a handful of communities in the early 21st century choose to mark the first of Elul as a day to celebrate animals, the holiday has gained momentum in recent years due to the increasing number of year-round Jewish community farms.

Here are some suggested ways that you can celebrate the “Birthday of Animals”:

- *Using the ritual designed by Rabbi Jill Hammer, gather friends, family, neighbors and pets to perform this ritual on, or near the first of Elul.*
- *This ritual and other resources for celebrating the New Year’s Day for the Animals (Rosh Hashanah LaBehemot) can be found at:
<http://opensiddur.org/new-years-day/for-domesticated-animals/>*
- *What sort of ritual could we use to appreciate the animals in our lives? For example, Catholics have an annual “Blessing of the Animals” (see article here <http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/francis/blessing.asp> or here http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/faith/francis_files/st_francis_of_assisi.html). Jewish community farms and some synagogues have similar rituals to bless animals in the community. Using the guide below, design a brief ritual that shows the animals in your community that you love and appreciate them.*

Guide for designing a ritual

1. *Sing: Choose or write a song or poem about one or more animals. You can use the text above or other favorite Jewish stories about animals from this book.*
2. *Look: Gather photos of or a group of local animals.*
3. *Share: Write out 2-3 questions to discuss human-animal relationships, such as “What is something you appreciate about animals?” and encourage each participant to share.*
4. *Listen: Blow the shofar, the familiar blast for this season of the year.*

