

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

*Farm Animal Awareness Programs
and Background Resources*



In partnership with the Humane Society of the United States



The word hazon means vision.

We create healthier and more sustainable communities in the Jewish world and beyond.

WE EFFECT CHANGE IN THREE WAYS:

Transformative experiences:

Our programs directly touch lives in powerful ways.

Thought-Leadership:

Writing, speaking, teaching, and advocacy.

Capacity-Building:

Supporting great people and projects in North America and Israel.

As Jews, we've been thinking about kashrut – about what is “fit to eat” – for nearly 3,000 years. And a growing number of people today realize that our food choices have a significant impact on ourselves, our families, and the world around us. Food is a connection point between our bodies, our communities, our environment, and our Jewish tradition.

Hazon stands at the forefront of a new Jewish Food Movement, leading Jews to think more broadly and deeply about our food choices. We began our food work in 2004, with our first Community Supported Agriculture site, in New York. Since then, we have grown to be the largest faith-based CSA network in the world, we have hosted an annual Food Conference, we have added educational resources that help guide individuals, families, and communities to be more educated, joyful consumers and stewards of the earth, and much more.

Today, our staff can be found around the country in New York City, at the Isabella Retreat Center in Falls Village, Connecticut, and in San Francisco, San Diego, Boulder, Denver, Philadelphia, and Detroit, and our resources are used in schools, synagogues, JCCs, workplaces, and homes all around the world.

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Introduction

Food is one of the most integral parts of any camp experience. Eating three meals a day together shapes relationships that endure for decades. Dining halls are not just places where we eat, but where we learn, pray, dance, sing, make friends and forge Jewish identities. Food is also a location where a host of Jewish ethical concerns intersect. With the exciting growth of the Jewish outdoor, food, and environmental education (JOFEE) movement, we at Hazon are excited to partner with the Humane Society of the United States and your camp to pilot programming that explores one of the most pressing ethical food issues of our time: how farm animals are treated in today's industrialized food system.

The content of the following activities and resources ranges from different Jewish perspectives on how we should relate to animals and understanding the lives of most animals raised to feed us, to exploring the environmental impact of raising animals to eat. Though the mini-grant requests that at least part of what you do addresses animal welfare specifically, we encourage you to address both the welfare and ecological dimensions of eating animals. These are serious topics, but the activities in this packet are time tested and proven to be both educational and fun!

We hope that staff and campers alike find these activities illuminating and meaningful. We look forward to hearing about how they go!

Please send your questions and comments to foodeducation@hazon.org.

Leader's Guide

In the following pages you will find **several programs** that you can use with your campers ages 10 and up. They can be applied as is, though we also invite you to customize them to fit your needs by combining or separating out the activities, extending or shortening the discussions, adding more or less complexity, or modifying in other ways to best fit your camp and campers.

If you only have 15 minutes, the **Meat Rap** and the **Energy Chain Game** are quick, fun, and informative activities. If you have 30 minutes, you can combine these two activities, or run one in combination with a discussion-based activity from the “Animals and Us” chapter of **Min HaAretz**. If you have longer than 30 minutes, you can run the full Min HaAretz lesson for maximum understanding and impact. The Meat Rap (which can be run for the entire camp or a smaller group) and Min HaAretz activities are great any time, but especially for a rainy day. The Energy Chain Game is best run outdoors, and in a small group.

You will also find in this packet easily digestible **background resources** on these topics and the Jewish values and wisdom that relate to them, including a “What if I only have 5 minutes?” beginner’s **Guide to Industrial Farming**, which you can both use to create your own programming, and to inform conversations with the campers.

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ENERGY CHAIN GAME

Learning objective: To teach kids that raising animals for food is energy-intensive. As energy travels up the food chain, some is always leaking out. The higher up on the food chain an organism is, the more energy and resources it takes to sustain it.

Materials: 2 buckets filled with water, 2 empty buckets (one each for the pasta group and the hamburger group), 5 cups (two that represent the sun, one each that represent wheat, corn, and cow), costumes for the different characters (optional)

Estimated length: 20 minutes

Instructions: Say: “Who’s hungry? Should we make some food? Over here are those who want pasta. Over here are those who want hamburgers.” (Note: if your students really are hungry, you may want to avoid this opening, or give them a snack.) Frame this as a demonstration rather than a game or a contest to avoid much frustration and disappointment. Assign campers to each of the following roles: in one group sun, wheat, pasta; in another group sun, corn, cow, hamburger. Give each camper the corresponding cup or bucket. The two food chains should stand in parallel lines (one “pasta” and one “hamburger”) with about 5 feet of space between each step in the chain. Any remaining campers can be judges or cheerleaders for the team of their choice, or you could have two lines of the same type (i.e. two “pasta” lines or two “hamburger lines”). If so, you’ll need to increase your materials accordingly. After the demonstration, have a discussion with the kids.

The two sides race to complete making their food item (pasta or burger) by filling that cup with water (which represents energy).

- The sun on each team is first and gets water from the bucket and then pours it into the cup of the next teammate in line (in one group sun, wheat, pasta; in another group sun, corn, cow, hamburger). The energy is poured from cup to cup until it reaches the end of the line. While the others are running back and forth, the final student in each line (pasta and hamburger, respectively) cannot move – they must wait to have the water brought to them.

- The race continues until one team fills its final bucket all the way, or the sun bucket becomes empty. - The winner is the team with more water in its final bucket. If the demonstration runs properly, the pasta cup will win every time.

Food for Thought:

- What happened? Why?
- Review what you have just learned (make sure students understand the “learning objective” above)
- Why does this matter? What does it have to do with us?
- Why do you think we encourage eating plant-based food here at camp?

MEAT RAP

Based on work by Teva educators David Blank and Simone Lindenbaum

Learning objective: To contrast the environmental impact of eating meat, specifically beef, with vegetarianism

Materials: table (optional)

Estimated length: 10 minutes – 30 minutes depending on the length of the discussion.

Instructions: This activity can either be run with counselors presenting to campers in the dining hall, or just with one group of campers. Three counselors sit down at a table or on the ground. One of the counselor is Chanie, a kid, who is hungry, and her parents (one VEG, one MEAT) have a short argument about whether or not to have meat for dinner. After the debate, have a conversation with kids about which side they agree with, or if they take a different position.

CHANIE: Mommy, Daddy, I'm so hungry – what's for dinner?

VEG: Listen up honey just sit right down
cause I'm gonna spit some rhymes that might turn you around
I know eating meat's delicious; I don't find that strange,
but it's leading to a *little* thing called climate change

MEAT: yeah, I've heard of climate change, and I'm not really impressed
what's it have to do with burgers? Take a chill pill, you're a mess
I'm not about to adopt all of your "eco-stress"

VEG: Lemme try to break this down for you if you think you're so smart
cows release a lot of methane every time they fart,
methane is a greenhouse gas, which traps sunlight energy
it's been causin' the earth's temperature to rise up by degrees

MEAT: I mean I guess I never knew that and it really is a shame
but what's my contribution, am I really all to blame?
maybe you're right, and meat production causes global warming
but just one burger- is it really worth mourning?
I'm sick of vegetarians and I'm not conforming!
If I stop eating burgers, what else am I to eat?
Every time I go to dinner, they are always serving meat

VEG: Don't you get it? This is bigger than your taste for juicy steak

Ignoring global climate change is a big fat mistake
Weather changes are a comin', that we can't deny
Super storms they are a stormin', trees be fallin' from the sky

MEAT: I'm not a fool, I don't deny climate change
but as for me being the problem, I think that's a little strange
cause everything I know about climate shift so far
is that warming is caused by smog released from factories and cars
what about families with 2 vehicles in their home
why don't you pick on their oil consumption
and leave my meat choices alone

VEG: True, smoke from cars and factories play a part
but they don't get half as hot as the gas in cow farts
eating just one burger is actually on par
with driving 320 miles in an average car!

MEAT: so don't drive and don't eat meat, now I know you is crazy
so making meat makes greenhouse gases, but your logic's getting hazy
do the words FOOD CHAIN mean anything to you?
or have you forgotten the ways of the world, you hippie dippy fooo
predators eat meat- it's not so complicated
we've been doing it for centuries and it's not yet outdated
just so you know, meat's a source of protein
that keeps up stores of energy and
makes me strong and lean
and by the way, if you're so clever,
then did you know eating cheese really isn't much better?
and are you prepared to give up your cheddar?
please daddio- and as for the weather--

VEG: you might think we are at the top of the food chain
but we also have a little brains
and for the sake of mother earth, then you would have to be insane-
to keep eating so much meat
cause it's causing the planet to warm and I already feel the heat
so maybe you can't give up meat altogether- ok
but maybe we could give up meat some of the days
meatless Monday, vegan Wednesdays
could be more manageable perhaps
that way we could slow complete ecological collapse



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MEAT: ecological collapse! its time to calm down
I'm not giving up my burger and you're acting like a clown
maybe eating meat is bad for the earth
but when I think about that burgers girth
and sinking my teeth in to that juicy meat
I just ignore the bad impacts and think, life is sweet
who cares about the earth and the next generation?
this is America! the United States of Burger Nation!

VEG: Burger Nation?! Abomination!!
Our founding father never thought that this great federation
Would become a dumping ground for cow flatulation!
But there's another reason to stop meat infatuation.
And believe you me, it's a sad situation.
Did you know factory farming represents almost all
of the meat we eat? And while I guess it's your call
if you wanna eat that burger it should be understood
that it came from a cow who didn't have it so good.
They cut off his horns without anesthetic
and they branded him, too—that just isn't copacetic.
Cows should eat grass but they made him eat corn
which is bad for his stomach and makes him forlorn

MEAT: Sure, I can cut down on burgers, I guess
Didn't know factory farms could be such a mess
Animal suffering just isn't cool
so let me propose to you a new rule:
I'll lay off the beef and switch over to chicken
A fine-roasted fowl is still finger-lickin'

VEG: Sorry to nag, but I'll spin a new verse:
Our fine feathered friends have it even worse!
Chickens and turkeys have been bred to grow so fast
that they're in constant pain, man this system can't last!
breasts so large that they got trouble standing,
just cuz we consumers are so very demanding.
Their genetics have been twisted into crazy contortions,
so now they all possess frankensteinian proportions!
But this debate is over, man, it's time to wrap it up
little Chanie's/Mikey's over here and he/she's begging us to stop
let's see if he/she has made his/her choice
more than anything, I just want to hear his/her voice

CHANIE: I never thought choosing what to eat would be so COMPLICATED. Now I REALLY don't know what to eat for dinner! I want to know what all these other people think. You out there! What do you all think we should eat for dinner?

Food for Thought:

We eat dinner seven times a week – thinking about everything you just heard, how many of those seven dinners do you think should include meat? Talk it over at your tables, and then hold up on your fingers how many nights a week (from zero to seven) you think you should eat meat.

[Kids discuss for a minute and hold up fingers. Call on a few kids to share their answers, and why. Close with a discussion of meat reduction options, e.g. Meatless Mondays, Vegan Wednesdays, and MOOSHY diet (Meat Only On Shabbat and Yom tov)]

TO RAISE ANIMALS: ANIMALS AND US

This chapter is an excerpt from Min Ha'Aretz, a forthcoming Hebrew school curriculum from Behrman House, 2016.

Learning objective: To spark discussions around the ethical treatment of animals based on Jewish and secular, ancient and contemporary texts.

Materials: Some of the four activities in this chapter have a writing component or texts, which will require either copies of the activity or pen and paper.

Estimated length: 10-90 minutes, depending on how many of the following activities you run.

Instructions: The following activities and discussion-starters can be run in sequence, or you can pick and choose from them. These are designed for 10 year olds and up and are a great rainy day activity.

Intro

Judaism contains rich and diverse traditions about how we should relate to animals. Even though some texts may seem to point in opposite directions, one thing is clear: our texts express deep concern about treating animals with respect, both for the sake of the animals themselves and to cultivate the virtue of *rachamim*, compassion within people. Compassion toward animals is referred to as *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* (literally, [do not cause] suffering to living beings).

The Talmudic rabbis who lived between 1400 and 2000 years ago applied the principle of *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* primarily to two groups of animals: animals raised for meat and animals used for labor. Today, few of us use animals for labor, but the ethical questions raised by the use of animals for meat are more poignant than ever. How should *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* affect our food choices today?

1. Introducing Compassion for Animals

Jewish tradition tells us that we should not view animals as created only for the sake of human pleasure. Yet, at the same time, Jewish law has authorized the killing of animals to produce meat and other goods that humans desire. How do we reconcile the idea that animals were created for their own purposes by God with the permission Jewish tradition gives to use animals for our own purposes?

In this story, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi struggled with this question and changed his ways over the course of his life.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi was sick for many years but he was cured, as he had become ill, through a strange happening.

He was once walking to the House of Study, when a calf, which was being driven to slaughter, broke loose and came up to the Rabbi, buried its head in the folds of Rabbi's clothes and wept, appearing to plead with him to save it from death. The Rabbi said to the calf: "Go to your fate, for to this end you were created." At this, a Heavenly Voice proclaimed from Heaven that, as the Rabbi had not had compassion on one of God's creatures, he should be punished with physical suffering.

For thirteen years this holy Rabbi suffered, and then one day he was healed just as suddenly. It happened like this:

A maidservant in the Rabbi's house was once cleaning a room when she found some newly-born weasels. She wanted to put them out of the house, but the Rabbi restrained her. "God has compassion on all creatures," he said, "and human beings must follow God's example. Leave the baby weasels in the house." A Heavenly Voice at once proclaimed that, just as Rabbi had had compassion on God's creatures, so should compassion be taken on him. He was immediately cured.

Adapted from Talmud, Bava Metzia 85a

In this story Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi both displays lack of compassion for animals and compassion for animals. List some examples of ways that people today are compassionate toward animals or not compassionate toward animals:

Compassionate:

Not-Compassionate

Has there been any time in your life that an animal "asked" you for help? How did you respond?

2. Eating Animals

Today, eating meat is a complicated issue. In the Torah we see that the controversy goes as far back as creation itself. In the first creation story in Genesis 1, God prohibits the eating of animals, and gives Adam and Eve only plants to eat.

I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

Genesis 1:29

Then, after the great flood that takes place in the story of Noah and the Ark, God gives Noah and his sons a blessing to repopulate the earth, and gives them permission to eat animals:

The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given you're your hands. 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.

Genesis 9:2-4

What are all of the questions do you have about this text?

What responsibilities do you think come along with the permission to eat animals?

Food Fact!: Some Jews today subscribe to a way of eating known as “MOOSHY,” which means “meat only on Shabbat and Yom Tov (holidays).”

3. What do you think?

Jewish tradition supports both the eating of meat, and vegetarian eating.



Rav Kook, left, the first Ashkenazi chief Rabbi in the land of Israel, thought that in an ideal world everyone would be vegetarians, and that God’s permission to eat meat was only a temporary concession. But he himself famously ate a small amount of chicken every Shabbat, perhaps to acknowledge that we are not yet living in a perfect world.

Maimonides, second from left, a doctor and philosopher, criticized both excessive meat-eating and strict meat-less eating, preferring a moderate diet. He advocated for eating meat on a rare and regular schedule – that is, eating it only on joyous occasions such as Shabbat, but indeed eating it each week.

Today, some rabbis and leaders, like Rabbis Katy Allen and Art Green, right, advocate for a vegetarian diet as a “new kosher.” Because of how factory farmed animals are raised, and because of environmental concerns, she argues that only vegetarian food is “fit to eat.”

Split into three different groups corresponding to each of the Jewish viewpoints below and with your group look at the fact sheet that corresponds to your position.

Based on what you have learned in this lesson, and your own feelings, with your group prepare a defense of your rabbi’s position. After each group presents, vote on which group was most convincing or that you most agree with personally!

- A. Rav Kook: In an ideal world, we would be vegetarians; but the world is not yet perfect, so we still eat some meat
- B. Maimonides: We should eat everything in moderation, and eat meat on joyous occasions
- C. Rabbis Katy Allen and Art Green: Eating a plant-based diet is a way to can uncover inner strength and holiness, and live out kashrut today

4. Eating Animals from Factory Farms

Today the question of eating meat has become more ethically important because of the typical methods used to produce meat, milk, and eggs. Most animals raised for food today are raised on industrial farms unlike anything the ancient rabbis imagined. Most chickens raised for eggs are kept in cramped cages their entire lives, never seeing sunlight. Most chickens raised for meat have been bred to grow so large so fast that they have trouble even walking without pain. Cattle naturally eat grass, but most cattle today are fed a diet of grains for the last few months of their lives that makes them gain weight quickly but also makes them sick.

Do not buy an animal before buying food for that animal to eat.

Talmud Yerushalmi, Ketubot 4:8

You must not sit down to your own meal before you have fed your pets and barnyard animals.

Talmud Bavli, Berachot 40a

When an animal must be killed for food, it must be done in such a way that the pain to animal is as little as possible.

Talmud Bavli, Baba Metzia 31a-32b

Today, there are many individuals and groups working on animal welfare issues. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the largest animal protection group in the US, with 11 million members from many different religions. Here is how they describe contemporary farming:

The vast majority of meat, eggs, and dairy products sold in American grocery chains and restaurants comes from animals raised in intensive-confinement systems (so-called factory farms) that impose significant stress on the animals in pursuit of efficiency. The result is that living creatures are often being treated as biological "machines."

The HSUS promotes eating with conscience and embracing the Three Rs—reducing the consumption of meat and other animal-based foods; refining the diet by avoiding products from the worst production systems (e.g., switching to cage-free eggs); and replacing meat and other animal-based foods in the diet with plant-based foods."

- HSUS

In Talmudic times, most people were farmers and so it was natural to think about how people interacted *directly* with farmed animals. Today, most of us don't interact directly with animals but most of us eat them, so the HSUS guidelines focus on how we should eat rather than how we should directly treat animals.

How are these three rules from the Talmud similar or different from the secular idea of the "Three Rs" presented by the HSUS?

Food Fact!: Some schools, like public schools in Los Angeles, California and Houston, Texas are now participating in a program called "meatless Mondays" where only vegetarian meals are served on Mondays.

Take Away

Jewish tradition offers powerful resources that allow us to reflect on meat-eating today, but we have to apply that knowledge to a farming system that is vastly different from biblical times. There are many authentically Jewish ways to respond to the fact that today most farmed animals are raised on factory farms, from eating meat with a few restrictions to eating no meat at all.

Jewish Animal Ethics

A Jewish Educators' Guide

We hope you'll find this brief guide to primary sources helpful in doing programming that addresses Jewish animal ethics at Jewish camps and beyond! The first three sections focus on pointing you to Rabbinic and Biblical Jewish texts and the final section points to contemporary news articles and select online sources.

This guide is based off the article "Jewish Animal Ethics" by Dr. Aaron Gross in the Oxford Handbook of Jewish Ethics

I. Why Do Jews Care About Animals?

Jewish texts universally argue that how humans treat animals is an important religious and ethical issue. Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) even includes animals in the command to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).¹ Though diverse Jewish perspectives agree *that* animals matter, there is a huge diversity of views about just *how much* they matter and the reasons *why* we should care about animals.

Reason One: Compassion to Animals For the Sake of Humanity

A. Compassion to animals is rewarded

- The Deuteronomic command to drive away a mother bird before taking her eggs (birds become distressed when their eggs are taken)—a paradigmatic example of compassion for animals in later Jewish traditions—is followed by the phrase "in order that it may go well for you" (22:7).
- "Anyone who is compassionate to creatures receives compassion from the heavens, and anyone who is not compassionate to creatures does not receive compassion from the heavens" (B. *Shabbat* 151b).²
- Noah and his sons came forth alive from the ark alive "only because they gave alms [to animals]" (*Midrash Tehillim*, Psalm 37).³
- In the legal code of Rambam (Moses ben Maimon, or "Maimonides," 1135-1204), the *Mishneh Torah*, we read: "He who shows mercy to animals will in turn be shown mercy by God."⁴
- *Sefer Hasidim*, a thirteenth century text of German Jewish pietists, asserts that "A person who hurts an animal needlessly will receive the same punishment" (§482).⁵

B. Morally outstanding individuals spontaneously show compassion to animals

- "The righteous person knows the needs [*nefesh*, literally "soul"] of his animal" (Proverbs 12:10).
- In Genesis (24:44) Abraham's servant determines that Rebecca—a paradigm of the good wife—is a suitable spouse for Isaac when she provides him water and, without prompting, provides water for his camels.
- In *Midrash Tanhuma* (Noah 5) both Noah and Joseph are deemed righteous men "because they nourished creatures."
- In *Exodus Rabbah* (2:2) Moses and David—the paradigmatic male leadership of Israel—were tested by God through how they functioned as shepherds.

C. Sensitivity to animals promotes sensitivity to other humans

- Ramban (Moses ben Nahman, “Nahmanides,” 1194-1270) in his commentary on both the Deuteronomic law that one must drive away a mother bird before taking her eggs (22:7) and the prohibition on killing a mother and its young on the same day (Leviticus 22:28) goes out of his way to argue that the reason for the law of the mother bird is not—despite the suggestion of some Jewish sources (including Rambam⁶)—the suffering of the mother bird, but to teach humans compassion.
- *Sefer ha-Hinnukh* cites Ramban’s view with approval: God’s “compassion does not extend over [individual] creatures with animal souls [but only over entire species] . . . for if so, *shehitah* [Jewish ritual slaughter of animals] would have been forbidden. Indeed, the reason for the restriction [i.e., of driving away the mother bird] is to teach us the quality of compassion” (Mitzvah 545).⁷
- Referring to the commandment in Deuteronomy 25:4 not to muzzle a domestic animal during its work (thus causing the animal suffering by tempting it with food it cannot eat), another law paradigmatically associated with compassion for animals, *Sefer ha-Hinnukh* makes the case that “from its root the commandment serves to teach us to make our souls beautiful ones. . . . by accustoming us to this even with animals, which were created only to serve us” (Mitzvah 596).

Reason two: The Inherent Value of Animal Creation

A. God cares for animals

- “God’s compassion is over all God’s works” (Psalms 145:9)
- In the rabbinic text, *Tanhuma*, Psalm 145:9 is cited to prove that God “shows compassion to animals in the same way He shows compassion to men” (*Noah* 6).
- In Psalms God is praised as the one “Who gives to the animals their food, to young ravens what they cry for” (Psalm 147:9).
- An interesting intensification of this theme is the idea that God cares so much for animals that unethical humans are saved for their sake.
 - In *Genesis Rabbah* we read that God grants the wicked kingdom of Alexander rain only for the sake of animals: the verse “Human and animal You save, Adonai” (Psalm 37:7) is reinterpreted by the text to mean, “Human for the sake of animal You save, Adonai” (33:1).
 - The Maharal (Judah ben Bezalel Löw ca. 1520-1609) writes that, “Everything, like grasses and fruits, were created for the sake of animals, which are flesh. . . . From this you see that everything else was created for the animals, while the animals were created in the world for their own sake” (*Be’er Ha-Golah*).⁸

B. Animals praise God

- Psalms has numerous examples:
 - The exhortations of Psalm 148—“Praise Adonai . . . wildlife and all animals, creeping things, and birds of wing. . . . Let them praise the name of Adonai” (148: 7-13)
 - The concluding line of the entire book, “Let all that breathes praise Adonai” (150:6).
- The theme also “occurs quite frequently in Talmudic and Midrashic literature,”⁹ for example the Talmudic interpretation of 1 Samuel 6:12 in which two cows pulling the Ark of the Covenant “turned their faces towards the Ark and sang a song [praising God]” (Bavli, *Avodah Zarah* 14b). The Rabbis go on to debate precisely what song the cows sang!
- *Perek Shirah*—a text of uncertain origin that consists of six chapters containing verses beginning with the formula “The such-and-such says...” and then putting a quotation from the Bible, most frequently Psalms, in the mouth of an animal, plant, or other part of the natural world. For example, “The hen is saying, ‘He gives food to all flesh [*basar*], for his covenant-love [*Hesed*] is eternal’ [Psalm 136:25].”

C. Animals are imbued with and reflect the divine

- Psalm 104:24 declares that God fashioned all creatures with wisdom.
- The Talmud, going further, maintains that each creature consented to the form God gave it, implying that God conferred with the animals (Bavli, *Hullin* 60a).
- “Balaam’s ass” sees a divine messenger on the road when Balaam is unable to do so (Numbers 22:21-28).
- There are numerous classical rabbinic stories of animal sagacity:
 - In *Pesikta Rabbati*, a sixth or seventh century redaction of earlier rabbinic materials, tells a story of a cow who, when sold to a gentile, still refused to work on the Sabbath and ultimately so impressed its new owner with its piety that the new owner converted to Judaism and became a great rabbi (14).¹⁰
 - In the Talmud we read that while the humans of today are like donkeys when compared to the previous, morally superior generation, they are “not like the donkeys of R. Hanina and R. Pinhas ben Ya’ir,” who refused to eat untithed barley and therefore are, the text seems to imply, our moral superiors (Bavli, *Shabbat* 12b).
- Moses Cordovero (1522-1570), argues that “the Supernal Wisdom is extended to all created things—minerals, plants, animals, and humans. . . . In this way man’s pity should be extended to all the works of the Blessed One just as the Supernal Wisdom despises no created thing.”¹¹

II. Eating Animals and Jewish Animal Ethics

Human Responsibility for Animals

- Summarizing, Jewish traditions argues that humans have an obligation:
 - to protect a precious and imperiled human “sentiment of compassion” that flows simultaneously towards both humans and animals,¹² and
 - to protect animals from humans where economic incentives make abuse likely.
- Significantly, these responsibilities are extended to all humanity.
 - The Mishnah prohibits eating a limb from a living animal, one of seven “Noahide laws” understood as obligatory for all humanity.¹³
 - Saadiah Gaon (ca. 882-942) argues that gentiles will be rewarded for observing the commandment to chase away the mother bird.¹⁴

Meat as an Ethical Problem

- Jewish traditions tend to view the act of killing animals as acceptable but morally fraught. The Talmud dictates that one should not eat meat unless:
 - one craves it and kills the animal on one’s own (Bavli, *Hullin* 84a),
 - has wealth (Bavli, *Hullin* 84a¹⁵), and
 - is educated (Bavli, *Pesahim* 49b).
- Some intellectual streams go further and view meat eating as a divine compromise, understanding *kashrut* (Jewish dietary law) as a vehicle intended to limit meat eating or even encourage us towards vegetarianism.
 - Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935), the first Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of pre-state Israel argues that meat is an ethical problem both because it ends an animal’s life, and God “did not create His creatures to die” (*Midrash Aggadah* to Genesis 1:29),¹⁶ and because killing poses a threat to human moral development.
 - Orthodox Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, writes that “the dietary laws are intended to teach us compassion and lead us gently to vegetarianism.”¹⁷
 - Liberal Rabbi Arthur Green describes vegetarianism as a “kashrut for our age.”¹⁸

- At the same time, another strain in the Jewish tradition specifically mandates eating meat (often “meat and wine”) on the Sabbath, and, in some versions, on other celebratory holidays as well, as part of the way the holiday is made special.¹⁹
 - Today, some Jews have honored this tradition through a practice called “MOOSHY,” “meat only on Shabbat and yom tovim (holidays).”

The Ideal of an Animal’s Good Death

- One important responsibility concerns the damage potentially done to the slaughterer’s ability to cultivate compassion.
 - For this reason diverse Jewish traditions argue that only men of high ethical caliber should be slaughterers (*shoh’tim*)—men who can resist the callousness that killing animals may engender.
 - The Baal Shem Tov (Israel ben Eliezer, 1698-1760) is said to have been so sensitive a butcher that he whetted the blade used for slaughter with his own tears.
- Another responsibility is to provide the animal a good, relatively quick death. This idea is often expressed in manuals used to train *shoh’tim*, which have historically cited Rambam’s position²⁰ that *shehitah* functions to prohibit cruelty.
- Some Talmudic protections regarding the killing of animals include:²¹
 - When an animal must be killed for food, it must be done in such a way that the pain to animal is as little as possible (Bavli, Baba Metzia 31a-32b).
 - Killing an animal for sport or fun is against the Jewish Law (Bavli, *Avodah Zarah* 18b).

The Ideal of a Life Free of Unnecessary Suffering

- The Torah law known as “*tza’ar ba’alei chayyim*,” prohibits cruelty to animals: there should be no “*tza’ar*”—literally “suffering” and understood to mean suffering that does not advance some legitimate human good—to “*ba’alei chayyim*”—to “living beings.”
- The *Rishonim* (leading rabbinic authorities of the 11th to 15th century) associate a variety of laws with this principle.
 - Frequently cited examples include:
 - The prohibition against plowing with two animals of unequal strength (paradigmatically an ox and donkey), which causes the weaker animal to suffer (Deuteronomy 22:10)
 - The prohibition on muzzling an ox as it labors, cruelly preventing it from eating (Deuteronomy 25:4)—rabbinically expanded to include all animals
 - Both versions of the Decalogue indicate that animals too are to be included in Sabbath rest (Exodus 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:14)
 - All of these laws are expanded by rabbinic traditions, creating a massive body of legal material regarding Jewish and human responsibilities to animals. For example:
 - The participation of animals in the rest of the Sabbath has lead both ancient and contemporary rabbis to be lenient in permitting activities that are otherwise prohibited on Shabbat if they function to relieve animal pain.
 - Rashi, commenting on Exodus 23:12, interprets the command to let animals rest on the Sabbath to not simply mean freedom from labor, but a positive state of contentment, and he thus rules that animals normally must have access to pasture on the Sabbath.
- Some Talmudic protections for animals include:²²
 - You must not sit down to your own meal before you have fed your pets and barnyard animals (Bavli, *Berachot* 40a).
 - Do not buy an animal before buying food for that animal to eat (Yerushalmi, *Ketubot* 4:8)

- Throwing stones at a dog or cat or hurting an animal in any way is against Jewish Law (Bavli, *Shabbat* 128b)

III. Jewish Animal Ethics Throughout Time and Texts

Torah (Pentateuch)

- The dominant metaphor of the Hebrew Bible is God as shepherd of God's human flock, Israel (Genesis 48:15, Isaiah 40:11, Psalm 23:1).
- God creates humans and animals on the same day and:
 - gives them the same blessing (Genesis 1:24-28)
 - grants humans dominion over animals but also commands them to be vegetarian (Genesis 1:26-30)
 - holds both humans and animals (*kol basar*) culpable for the earth's corruption (Genesis 6:12)
 - is angered by human craving for meat (*basar*) (Numbers 11:33)
 - (reluctantly?) allows humans to eat all living things within a sacrificial system that includes a prohibition on consuming blood as a permanent symbol of the sanctity of life (Genesis 9:3-5)²³
 - covenants with all creation (Genesis 9:8-17)
 - ordains specific legal protections for animals in both the Exodus and Deuteronomic legal codes (Exodus 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:14)

Nevi'im (Prophets) and Kethuvim (Writings)

- The Prophetic texts of the Bible continue many of these themes, for example by offering visions of the coming messianic age that imply a return to Edenic vegetarianism (Isaiah 11:6-7, Joel 4:18, Amos 9:14, and Hosea 2:24).
- In the *Ketuvim* (Writings):
 - The Psalms are dense with images of animal praise of God and God's care for animal life (for example, Psalms 65, 148, and 150).
 - Proverbs argues that the righteous are attentive to animal welfare (Proverbs 12:10).
 - Job extols the ability of animals to teach humans (12:7-8) and is told by God that the fantastic animal, behemoth, is "the first of God's work" (40:19).
 - Ecclesiastes questions the degree to which animals (*behemah*) are inferior to humans (3:19).

Rabbinic Texts

- All comprehensive rabbinic legal compendiums expand these biblical traditions by incorporating sections on animal ethics. See above for examples.
- Classical rabbinic texts, biblical commentators, and liturgists also expand these biblical traditions in the many ways already documented above.
 - One especially prominent story about compassion for animals is told about the great rabbi Judah the Prince:
A calf being lead to *shehita* [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. . . 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" (Bavli, *Bava Metzi'a* 85a).

IV. Farmed Animal Ethics in the News and Online

The State of the American Meat Industry (Not Specific to Judaism)

- This 2015 front page *New York Times* article documents abuse of farmed animals funded by US taxpayers: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/20/dining/animal-welfare-at-risk-in-experiments-for-meat-industry.html?_r=2.
- This 2015 short opinion piece by the famed *New York Times* columnist Nicolas Kristof reflects on the contemporary chicken industry: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/15/opinion/sunday/nicholas-kristof-to-kill-a-chicken.html>.
- This 2015 short trade article talks about the growing interest in vegan meals among millennials: <http://www.qsrmagazine.com/news/vegan-fare-finds-traction-among-millennials>
- This 2015 short article talks about how the meat industry has challenged recent dietary guidelines proposed by the federal government: <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/healthcare/240536-americans-eating-green-meat-industry-seeing-red>.

The AgriProcessors Kosher Slaughter Scandal

In 2004 one of the nation's largest kosher slaughterhouses, AgriProcessors, located in Postville, Iowa, became the subject of an undercover investigation by PETA documenting egregious abuse to animals during kosher slaughter. Subsequent investigations showed that workers, too, were being mistreated and the debates that the AgriProcessors controversies started continue today.

- The story about AgriProcessors broke in the *New York Times*; here is a link to the *original* article that started the national debate! <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/01/national/01kosher.html>
- 9 years after the original documentation of animal abuse and 7 years after the initial documentation of worker abuse, this 2013 article talks about the failure of the scandals to initiate lasting reforms: <http://forward.com/opinion/176455/agriprocessors-raid-made-us-briefly-rethink-kashru/>.

Recent Jewish Perspectives on Eating Meat Ethically:

- This article by a shochet (Jewish religious slaughterer) talks about problems and solutions in the kosher poultry industry and beyond: <http://blogs.forward.com/the-jew-and-the-carrot/209837/the-mutant-on-your-thanksgiving-plate/>.
- Famed (and Jewish!) *New York Times* columnist Mark Bittman on why he isn't going (entirely) vegan: <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/05/21/why-im-not-a-vegan/> (more on Bittman and Judaism: <http://www.jta.org/2014/01/14/life-religion/is-new-york-times-food-writer-mark-bittman-going-kosher>).
- One rabbi's reflection on becoming a shochet: <http://jcarrot.org/thoughts-on-becoming-a-shochet>.
- This article talks about ongoing problems in the slaughter of cattle for kosher beef. Although written a few years ago, *it remains accurate in 2015* as this guide to press: <http://forward.com/articles/144037/kosher-meat-still-slaughtered-inhumanely/>.

Recent Jewish Perspectives on Vegetarianism and Veganism

- This long-form Tikkun article presents a comprehensive case for Jewish vegetarianism: <http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/the-planet-saving-mitzvah-why-jews-should-consider-vegetarianism>.
- This Jerusalem Post article analyzes traditional Jewish texts on vegetarianism, both pro and con: <http://www.jpost.com/Not-Just-News/Ask-the-Rabbi-Does-Jewish-law-promote-vegetarianism-383650>.

- This Wall Street Journal article explains why one Orthodox rabbi gave up eating meat: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/shmuly-yanklowitz-why-this-rabbi-is-swearing-off-kosher-meat-1401404939>.
- This short article talks about how the vegetarian meals served at a recent Limud conference were received: <http://forward.com/food/171595/meat-anot-levyonim-how-meat-makes-a-mitzvah/>.

Animal Welfare Science and Kosher Slaughter

- Dr. Temple Grandin is the most famous animal welfare scientist in the world and is both a passionate defender of the potential humaneness of kashrut and a critic of many contemporary practices, like “shackle and hoist” slaughter. Not for the faint of heart, this link take you to comprehensive list of Grandin’s articles on kosher and halal slaughter: <http://www.grandin.com/ritual/rec.ritual.slaughter.html>.

Finding Higher Welfare Kosher Meat

- Check out Hazon’s “Kosher Sustainable Meat” webpage for guidance on available purveyors of higher welfare kosher meat and links to further articles: <http://hazon.org/jewish-food-movement/kosher-shopping/kosher-sustainable-meat/>.

¹ Elijah Judah Schochet, *Animal Life in Jewish Tradition* (New York: KTAV, 1984), 263.

² Unless otherwise indicated, Hebrew translations are those of Aaron S. Gross.

³ *The Midrash on Psalms*, trans. William Gordon Braude, 2 vols., vol. 1, Yale Judaica series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 422.

⁴ *Kinyan, Hilkhot Avadim* 9:8. As translated in Schochet, *Animal Life in Jewish Tradition*: 202.

⁵ Yehudah HaChassid, *Sefer Chasidim: The Book of the Pious*, trans. Avraham Yaakov Finkel (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1997), 270.

⁶ See *Moreh Nebukim (The Guide for the Perplexed)* 3:48.

⁷ Translation based on the annotated English translation of Charles Wengrov: *Sefer ha-Hinukh*, trans. Charles Wengrov (Jerusalem & New York: Feldhaim, 1988), 191-92.

⁸ As translated in Shemesh, "Vegetarian Ideology In Talmudic Literature and Traditional Biblical Exegesis," 146.

⁹ Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (at note 22 above), p. 45.

¹⁰ For an extensive list see Dov Neumon, "Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1954), 215-18.

¹¹ Moses Cordovero, *The Palm Tree of Deborah*, trans. Louis Jacobs (New York: Sepher-Hermon, 1981), 83-84 (Ch 3 in Hebrew).

¹² The idea of a “sentiment of compassion” that, like animals, needs protection is helpfully theorized by Jacques Derrida. See Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills and ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, Perspectives in continental philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 28-29.

¹³ T. *Avodah Zarah* 8:4; B. *Sanhedrin* 56b.

¹⁴ See Schochet, *Animal Life in Jewish Tradition*: 263.

¹⁵ Also see Rashi on Deuteronomy 12:20.

¹⁶ As cited in Shemesh, "Vegetarian Ideology In Talmudic Literature and Traditional Biblical Exegesis," 146.

¹⁷ Shlomo Riskin Riskin, "A Sabbath Week-Shabbat Ekev," *The Jewish Week*, Aug 14 1987.

¹⁸ Arthur Green, *Seek My Face, Speak My Name* (Northvale, NJ; London: Jason Aronson, 1992), 87-89.

¹⁹ David J. Bleich, "Vegetarianism and Judaism," in *Judaism and Environmental Ethics*, ed. Martin D. Yaffe (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Lexington Books, 2001).

²⁰ *Moreh Nevukhim (The Guide for the Perplexed)* 3:26, 48.

²¹ This list of Talmudic rules is taken from the Teva Learning Center factsheet on *tza'ar ba'alei chayyim*.

²² This list of Talmudic rules is taken from the Teva Learning Center factsheet on *tza'ar ba'alei chayyim*.

²³ See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, Anchor Bible Series (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1991), 718, 33, 35, 36, 41; Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 137.

LEARNING ABOUT FACTORY FARMING, FAST

When Jewish novelist Jonathan Safran Foer decided to investigate factory farming in his international bestseller *Eating Animals*, he famously had to sneak into farms in the middle of the night to get the information he needed about this secretive industry! Today, copious video and other impressive online documentation of factory farming by US animal protection groups has made it easier than ever to pull back the cellophane veil and understand how meat is really produced. Even spending just 5 minutes to familiarize yourself with factory farming and the groups working against it can help you execute programs with more confidence, energy, and depth.

I only have five minutes!

Check out the Humane Society of the United States's statement on humane eating (HSUS):

"The vast majority of meat, eggs, and dairy products sold in American grocery chains and restaurants comes from animals raised in intensive-confinement systems (so-called factory farms) that impose significant stress on the animals in pursuit of efficiency. The result is that living creatures are often being treated as biological 'machines.'

"The HSUS promotes eating with conscience and embracing the Three Rs—reducing the consumption of meat and other animal-based foods; refining the diet by avoiding products from the worst production systems (e.g., switching to cage-free eggs); and replacing meat and other animal-based foods in the diet with plant-based foods."

And check out [this 2.5 minute clip](#) from the HSUS featuring House of Cards star Kate Mara.

I want to learn more!

Check out HSUS's website under the ["Factory Farming" tab](#) for quick information on the biggest problems and ideas about what you can do. But if you really want to understand the issues, you'll want to check out HSUS's reports. You can find the full list of them [here](#). We especially recommend, the HSUS ["white paper"](#) on "The Welfare of Animals in the Meat, Egg, and Dairy Industries".

Still hungry? Check out Foer's *Eating Animals* for a comprehensive exploration of industrial ag! As Jewish educators participating in this Hazon-HSUS initiative, you will receive a complimentary copy.