

# Climate Action Shabbat Guide



*Adapted for the present moment*  
*October 2021*



**DAYENU**  
A Jewish Call to Climate Action

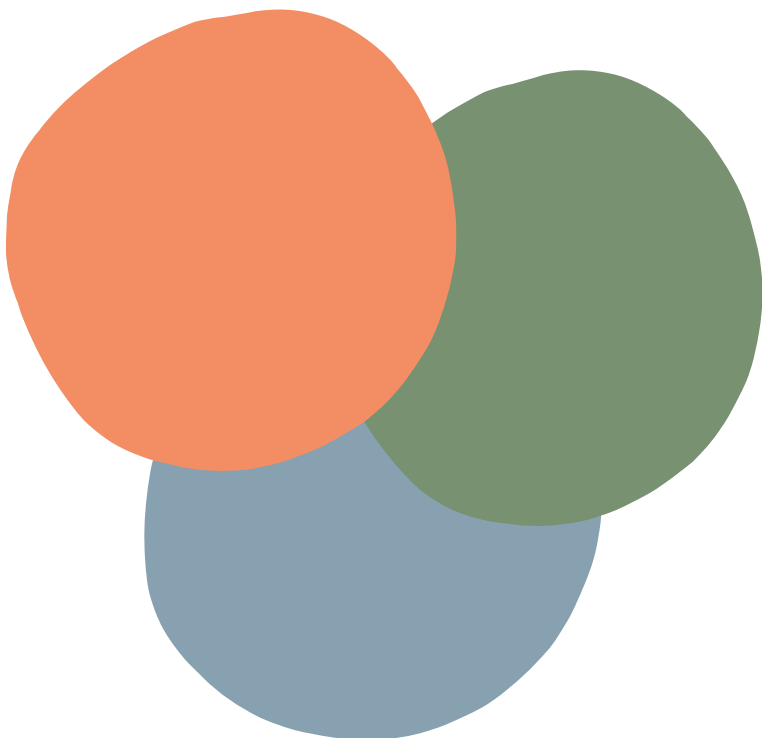


# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This Shabbat Guide is organized around how to take meaningful climate action as an individual, in community, and through the political system. For each sustainability practice, we have described what it is, why it matters, why it's a Jewish value, and how you can incorporate it into your life. Each section also includes questions for you to consider or discuss around a table.

Feel free to go through this Guide in order or jump to a particular section. Read it all at once or read a new section each week. Try to incorporate a mix of these practices into your life right away, or start with one sustainability practice and go from there.

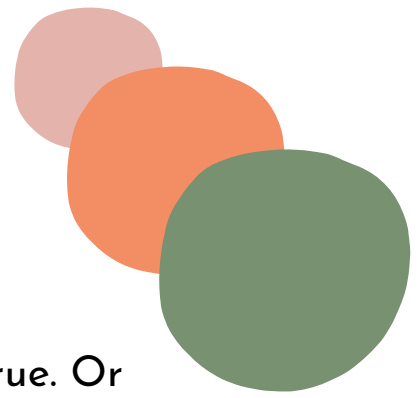
This Guide is designed to be an interesting educational resource and discussion stimulator as well as a practical set of tips and tools for you to adopt. The goal is for you to more closely align your Shabbat practices with your sustainability and Jewish values.



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# TODAY, THE WORLD IS PERFECT.



One out of every seven days, we live as if this were true. Or perhaps, we live in a way that makes this true. On Shabbat, we attune our eyes and our hearts to the deep beauty inherent in each moment. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel says we build “a cathedral in time,” Shabbat is the weekly pinnacle of holiness in the rhythm of Jewish life. And yet, observance of Shabbat in any traditional sense almost immediately brings up a list of what we can’t do. Don’t drive. Don’t spend money. Don’t turn on lights. What’s the wisdom behind these restrictions? What’s the big idea? Are these commandments still relevant today?

Instructively, the restrictions the rabbis imposed on Shabbat directly correspond to the work required of our ancestors to build their wandering desert tabernacle, the mishkan. That is, the work required of them to build their sacred space is the work we’re specifically prohibited from doing on Shabbat. Why? For six days a week, we build the world we seek to live in. We dedicate ourselves to bettering our surroundings. On the seventh, we enjoy the beauty of it all.

Today our work looks different. We are not required to grind grain in order to make challah, or weave fabric to make clothing. Our work often unfolds behind screens and in one way or another contributes to keeping our modern economy moving forward. Yet the intention and purpose of Shabbat remains. We are called to set one day each week aside, to cease our labors, to contemplate a world of equality, and to relax in a joyous respite.

# SETTING THE TABLE

Hosting a "Climate Action Shabbat" doesn't have to be hard. Use this discussion guide to explore the ways you and your guests can relate to climate change and sustainability.

If you are serving dinner, serve a plant-based meal free of any animal products like meat, eggs, or dairy. Purchase organic and fair-trade ingredients, and offer blessings for all of the food you have prepared. Asking guests to carpool, walk, or use public transportation is a great way to lower the carbon footprint of your gathering.

Reminding your guests that all we have comes from the Earth is a wonderful way to get the conversation started. Look up additional blessings for fruits, vegetables, sunset, body movement, or anything else you feel like celebrating!

## BLESSINGS



Lighting the Shabbat Candles:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת

*Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.*

Blessed are You, God, Ruler of the universe, who sanctified us with the commandment of lighting Shabbat candles.

# BLESSINGS

## Blessing the Children:

יְשִׁימְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה

Yesimcha Elohim k'Ephraim v'chi-Menashe.

May you be like Ephraim and Menashe.

יְשִׁימְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה

Yesimcha Elohim k'Sarah Rivka Rachel v'Leah

May you be like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

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## Blessing the Children continued:

יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ

יֵאָר ה' פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ

יִשָּׂא ה' פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yivarechecha Adonai v'yishmerecha

Ya'er Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka

Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem lecha shalom

May God bless you and protect you.

May God show you favor and be gracious to you.

May God show you kindness and grant you peace.

# BLESSINGS

## Blessing Over the Wine:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

*Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

*Blessed are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.*

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## Blessing for Hand Washing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

*Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and command us concerning the washing of the hands



# BLESSINGS

Blessing Over the Bread:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,  
hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

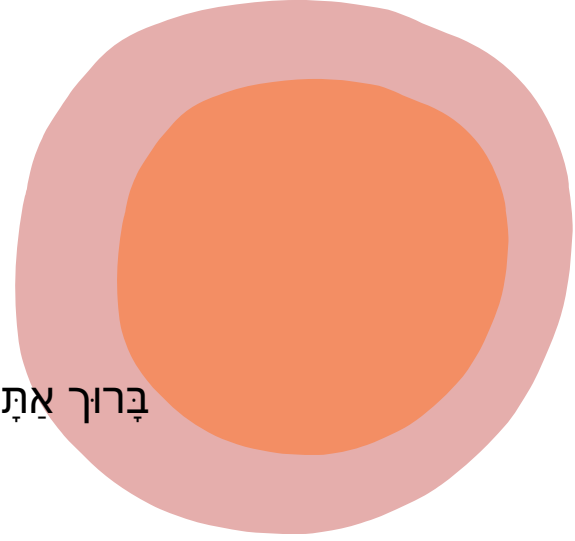
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,  
who has brought forth bread from the earth.

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## WHY THESE ACTIONS

Throughout Jewish history, we have embraced the idea that one individual has the power to change the world. Facing the very real threats of climate change is no different. Whether modifying your personal behavior at home or leading the charge in advocating for political and social change locally or nationally, *you have the power to build a better world.*

While there are countless ways to take action, we make four recommendations that truly make a difference. Embracing a **plant-rich diet**, **reducing and greening your energy consumption**, **adjusting your transportation**, and **advocating for policy change** can drive down greenhouse gas emissions - bringing us closer to avoiding the most harmful impacts of the climate crisis.

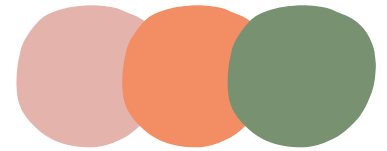




# PLANT-RICH DIET

## WHAT IS THIS?

A plant-rich diet means eating foods that come from plants. This includes fruits and vegetables, as well as nuts, seeds, oils, grains, and legumes. Plant-based eating means avoiding food that comes from animals like meat, dairy, and eggs.



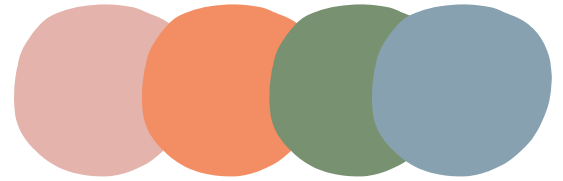
## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Industrial meat and dairy production are responsible for 15% of all greenhouse gas emissions (methane, CO<sub>2</sub>, and nitrous oxide, etc), major deforestation, and are the fifth largest contributor to climate change in America. Unfortunately, nearly all kosher-certified animal products come from animals raised on factory farms. By switching to a plant-rich diet, we can reduce industrial meat production.

## WHY IS THIS JEWISH?

Our rabbis are clear that we should treat our animals with the utmost respect. This value is called "tsa'ar ba'alei hayim." Up until Noah and the flood, that meant never eating animals. While that changed after the flood, there is still a strong emphasis on eating only the animal products that we need, and a positive association with eating fruits and vegetables, since they are naturally more sustainable.

# PLANT-RICH DIET



## SHABBAT PRACTICE:

When planning your Shabbat menu, consider reducing the amount of animal-based products that you serve. Try serving a vegetarian or vegan meal. Or, if you are going to serve a meat entree, try increasing the number of filling side dishes that you serve, like roasted vegetables, grain salads, or hearty soups, so that you can decrease the portion of meat for each person. Consider sourcing any meat you decide to serve from small, local, and/or family farms. Farmers markets are a great place to find local, non-industrial (usually non-kosher) meat. For ethically-raised kosher meat, try ordering from Kol Foods or Grow and Behold. Purchasing animal products from farms practicing regenerative agriculture can actually support more healthy ecosystems.

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## PLANT RICH DIET DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Have you ever had a vegetarian or vegan Shabbat meal? What did it feel like? Did you miss eating meat? Did you feel more aligned with your sustainability values?
- 2) If “kosher” simply means “fit to eat,” how would you define “kosher” for yourself? What foods do you see as fit to eat? What sustainability or ethical factors might be included in your definition? What would it look like to “keep kosher” according to this discussion?

# SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

## WHAT IS THIS?

There are lots of ways to lighten our transportation footprint. Carpooling, walking, biking, opting for more fuel efficient cars, using public transportation, or switching to electric vehicles are just some of the ways we can approach sustainable transportation.

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Fossil fuels used for transportation are responsible for about 30% of total U.S. emissions, and passenger car emissions have increased by 50% in the last 10 years. Considering the U.S. is the second largest contributor to green-house gasses in the world, we have a responsibility to lighten our impact. Our personal driving and flying habits contribute significantly to global warming and the crises we face today. By adjusting our transportation habits we can reduce the impact we have on the earth.

## WHY IS THIS JEWISH?

Every seventh day we are commanded to rest - to take a day apart and recognise the gifts we have been given. Refraining from the hustle and bustle, settling in with our families and friends, and allowing the day to move at its natural pace is the heart of the Shabbat experience for many. Additionally, many Rabbis teach that turning on a car engine ignites a flame which is strictly prohibited according to Jewish law. Whether you have an observant or more lenient Shabbat, it is clear - leave the car in the driveway.

# SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

## SHABBAT PRACTICE:

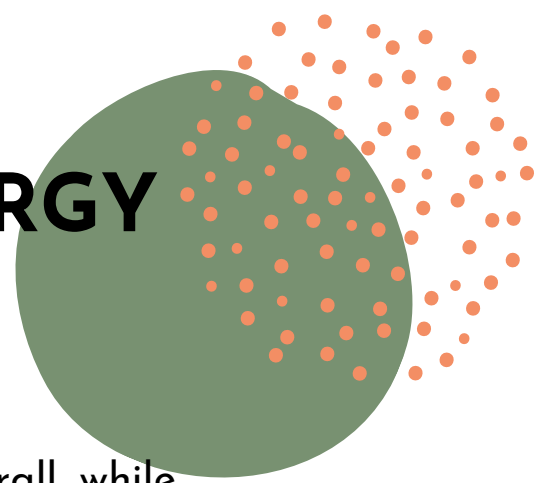
When planning your Shabbat experience, think about how you or your guests would normally arrive for dinner. If they drive, encourage them to carpool. If they have errands to run on Saturday, encourage your guests to take a day of rest, or if they must go out, to use a more sustainable option like biking, walking, or riding public transportation. If we all committed to setting one day aside not to drive, we could reduce our personal emissions by as much as 14%. Discuss the pros and cons of using alternative methods of transportation at dinner, and consider the teachings of the Torah to truly rest one day a week.

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## TRANSPORTATION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the long-term implications of driving the way you currently do? Do you drive a big SUV or mini-van? Could you downsize? Go electric? What would this mean for your family logistically, financially, and on a day to day basis?
2. What would it take for you to further cut your emissions from transportation? Could you take one less flight each year? If you were to swap a vacation destination you must fly to for one you could drive to, where would it be and why?

# GREENING YOUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION



## WHAT IS THIS?

Energy reduction refers to using less energy overall, while greening our energy consumption draws what we do use from renewable resources. Coal, oil, and gas often power our household electronics, heat and air condition our homes, and fuel our cars. Reducing our energy consumption or switching to clean, "green" energy can take many forms, all with the goal of leaving a smaller mark.

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

The United States gets about 80% of its total energy from oil, coal, and natural gas, all of which are fossil fuels. These types of fuels release greenhouse gases as well as other dangerous pollutants. By using less energy or transitioning your home or synagogue to renewable energy, you will help to lessen harmful emissions.

## WHY IS THIS JEWISH?

Above every ark in every synagogue across the world, we are commanded to have an eternal flame - a ner tamid - that never goes out. Switching to renewable energy sources is truly the only way to fulfil this commandment, for nonrenewable energy will one day run out, taking great swaths of habitat, species diversity, and healthy air with it. In order to be a light to the nations (Isaiah 49:6), it is upon us as Jews to power our light sources - and the rest of our daily items that require electricity to run - in a way that honors humanity and all of God's creation.



# GREENING YOUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION

## SHABBAT PRACTICE:

Traditional Shabbat practice already seems to address the value of reducing energy use, as it prohibits turning electronics or appliances on or off, as well as the driving of cars. If you do not already observe Shabbat in this way, try it out. Commit to leaving the lights off the whole day. Try only preparing meals that do not require cooking or heating up. Cut your usage of electronic devices. Finally, unplug all of the appliances, electronics, and chargers in your home prior to Shabbat, so they do not draw energy while not in use.

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## ENERGY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many appliances, electronics, and chargers do you currently have plugged in that are not in use? Does knowing that each of these is wasting energy and costing you money inspire you to unplug them when not using them? Why or why not?

2. Have you ever put away your devices (phone, computer, tv, tablet) for 25 hours straight? If not, do you think it would be hard? Would you consider trying it? If yes, what is it like for you? What value do you see in doing it, beyond the environmental benefits?

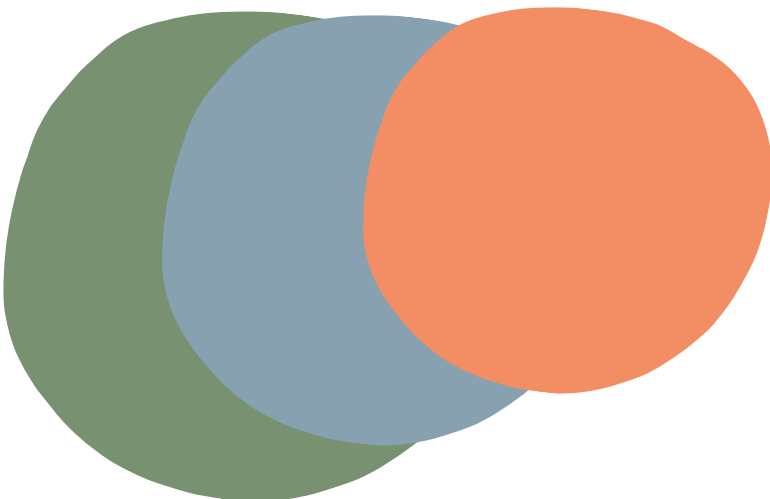
# ADVOCATING FOR POLICY CHANGE

## HOLDING OUR POLICY MAKERS TO THEIR PROMISES

Policy change is critical to avert the worst of the climate crisis. Our collective vision of a just and livable future can only be achieved if countries deliver on their promises to slash greenhouse gas emissions and transition to a clean energy future. It's our responsibility to demand our governments take decisive action to address the climate crisis and hold them accountable to deliver results.

## THE ROLE OF PEOPLE OF FAITH

As people of faith, we have a unique role in climate action, raising a moral voice for action and our obligation to protect the most vulnerable. Recognizing the stakes of COP26, the Vatican and His Holiness Pope Francis convened representatives from the world's major religions to draft Faith and Science: An Appeal for COP26, a multifaith statement on the urgency to confront the climate crisis. Pope Francis has been a leading voice on climate action since the release of the *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* encyclical in 2015.



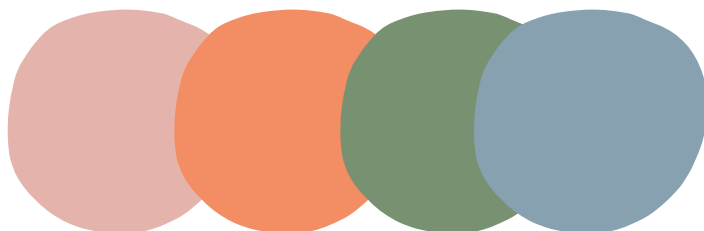
# ADVOCATING FOR POLICY CHANGE

## THE U.S.: BUILD BACK BETTER AND THE WAY FORWARD

The U.S. Congress is on the verge of passing an economic and social recovery legislation - the Build Back Better agenda - which contains historic levels of investments in clean energy, environmental justice, and good jobs. The Build Back Better agenda should be passed without delay to accelerate our nation's transition to a clean energy future and demonstrate to the global community that we are serious about turning the tide of the climate crisis.

And yet, there is no denying that fossil fuel companies and corporations - including those who have made pledges and forceful commitments to climate action - and the politicians who do their bidding have succeeded in winnowing down the scale and scope of the legislation.

Our way forward is clear: We need to keep building the power and reach of the Jewish climate movement to demand action at all levels of government and across all sectors. This includes calling on the Biden Administration to regulate emissions from transportation and electricity generation, the leading contributors to the climate crisis; ban oil and gas extraction on public lands once and for all; and cancel the construction of current and future fossil fuel projects.





# CLIMATE JUSTICE 101



## HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY

The United States is by far the greatest emitter of greenhouse gases since the Industrial Revolution, and therefore bears the greatest moral responsibility for addressing the climate crisis. The United Kingdom, in eighth place among the world's nations, must also claim significant responsibility.

The U.S., UK, and other wealthy countries that profited from years of polluting the earth must take ambitious action, passing bold domestic policies and regulations that drastically drive down emissions and support clean energy solutions. They must also provide direct financial support - climate finance - to poorer nations who will be most impacted by climate change and need additional resources to cope as well as and technology to transition to clean energy. One noteworthy but controversial dimension of climate equity is a recognition that some harms are now unavoidable, for instance small island nations lost to sea level rise. These countries and communities deserve to be compensated for the "loss and damage."

## WHAT IS FAIR SHARE?

A "fair share" approach is a commitment to climate action at a scale that's commensurate with its historic responsibility. But most nations are falling short. In the case of the United States, the Biden Administration pledged to more than halve greenhouse gas emissions by the end of the decade, but a recent report estimated that the United States' fair share was almost four times the current pledge. The UK's pledge is over a two-third's emissions reduction by the decade's end, but is similarly a fraction of its historic responsibility. Meanwhile, the world's wealthiest nations are missing their climate finance pledges.

# THE COP, THE PARIS AGREEMENT, AND GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION



## WHAT IS THE COP?

The COP or “Conference of Parties” is the annual global climate negotiations organized under the UNFCCC, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The first COP was held in Berlin, Germany in March 1995. This year’s COP is the 26th meeting of world leaders, taking place October 31 - November 12 in Glasgow, Scotland, with the government of the United Kingdom serving as host.

## WHAT IS THE PARIS AGREEMENT?

The Paris Agreement is an international climate treaty aimed at limiting global warming well below 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), keeping global temperatures within a range that scientists believe will avert the most harmful impacts of the climate crisis. In order to reach this goal, nations need to halve their greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

The Paris Agreement calls for countries to ratchet up their greenhouse gas emissions reductions over time - what’s known as “raising ambition.” Every five years, countries are expected to submit new, higher emissions reduction targets - known as their “Nationally Determined Contribution” or NDC - to accelerate and scale up emissions reductions.

# THE COP, THE PARIS AGREEMENT, AND GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION



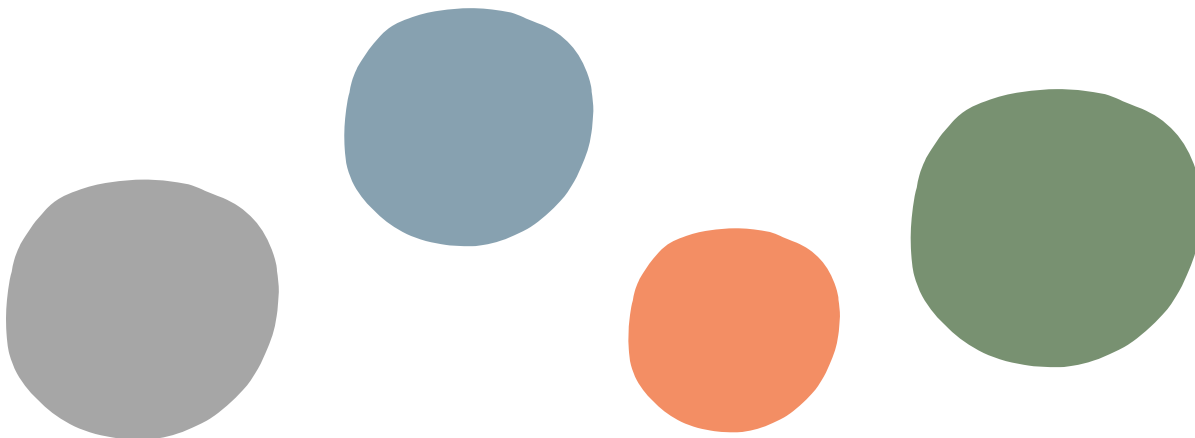
## WHY ARE ALL EYES ON THE COP?

Since last year's negotiations were postponed, COP26 marks five years since the signing of the Paris Agreement, and will be the first chance for countries to raise their commitments for the next five-year cycle.

While most countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, have already announced their pledges, COP26 serves as a bellwether for whether countries are willing to do what's needed to avert the worst of the climate crisis.

## COP 26 and VACCINE EQUITY:

Unfortunately, COP26 will be that much more inequitable as unequal access to vaccines, added travel costs and challenges, and other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic make it difficult for representatives from countries that are already and will ultimately be most impacted by the climate crisis to participate.

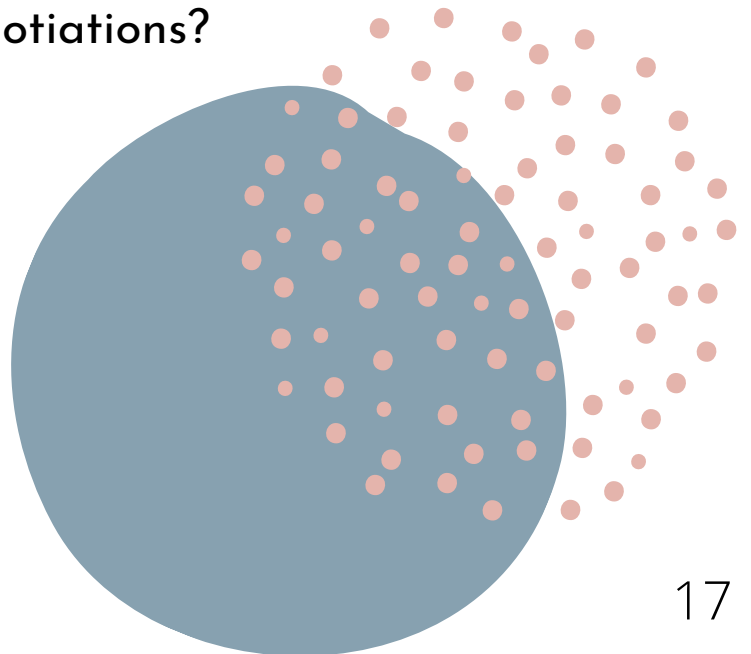


# ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) From Cain's quip, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:1-13) to the Golden Rule "love your neighbor as yourself," (Lev. 19:18). Jewish texts deeply engage on the topic of responsibility. How can Judaism inform our understanding of historic responsibility and a fair shares approach to climate action?

2) In Judaism, words are significant and vows are sacred, chief among them G-d's covenant with the Jewish people. How might Judaism's understanding of vows and promises inform how we view the COP26 global climate negotiations?

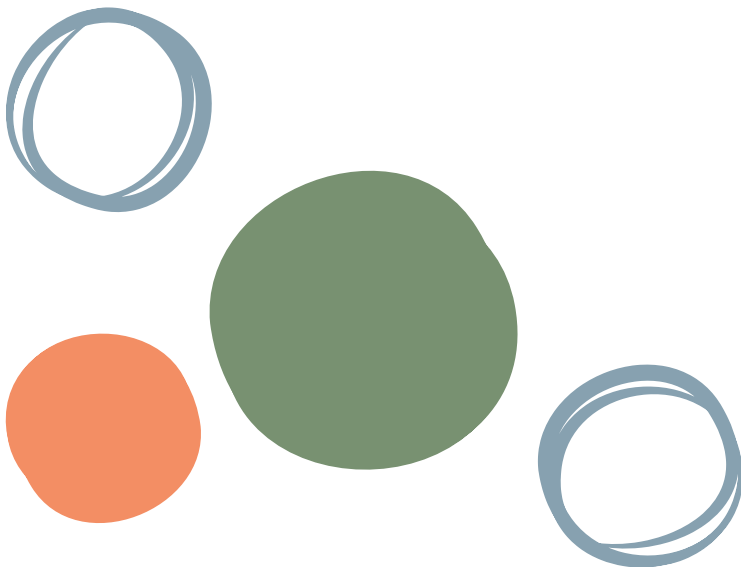


# GET INVOLVED

Hosting a Climate Action Shabbat is a great way to take action on climate change, but truthfully, it just scratches the surface of the work that must be done. We are called to be Shomrei Adamah - Guardians of the Earth; to take up the mantle of justice - Tzedek, Tzedek, Tirdorf; and consider the implications for the generations who come after us - L'Dor V'Dor.

With that in mind, we invite you to

- 1) Take action on the top three greenhouse gas emissions discussed in this guide including reducing your consumption of animal products; reducing how far and how often you drive or fly; and reducing your energy consumption.
- 2) Join a political action campaign with Dayenu or start a Leadership Circle or Jewish Youth Climate Movement Kvutzah (chapter) in your community. Lift your voice to create real and lasting change.
- 3) Encourage your Synagogue, JCC, Federation, Day School, or other Jewish Institution to join the Hazon Seal of Sustainability.



# COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND COALITION BUILDING

While all of this can feel overwhelming, you are not alone. You do not have to reinvent the wheel to make a real difference. If you feel a call to act in your local community or on the national level, seek out a Jewish Youth Climate Movement Kvutzah (chapter), or join a Dayenu Leadership Circle. These powerful structures exist in communities across the United States to support and facilitate the real work of creating policy change. We know we must act - each of us, individually - but we also know that our actions alone will never be enough to turn the tide of climate change. By using existing structures and resources you can save invaluable time and energy as well as find countless other voices, just like yours, calling out for change.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Dayenu Circles** - <https://dayenu.org/circles>

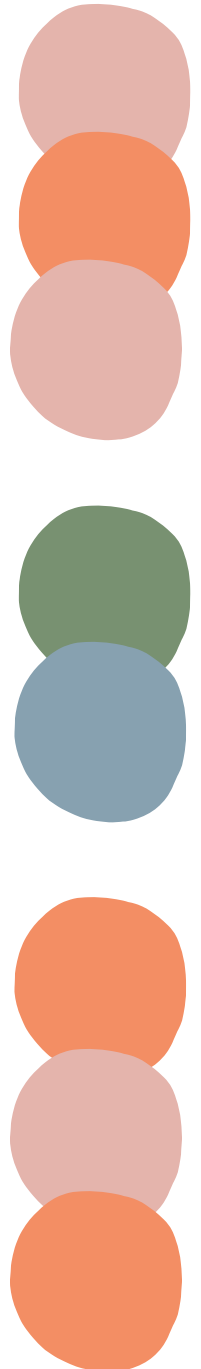
**Jewish Youth Climate Chapters** -  
<https://www.jewishyouthclimatemovement.org/>

**Dayenu Political Action** - <https://dayenu.org/action>

**Hazon Seal of Sustainability** - <https://seal.hazon.org>

**Household Carbon Calculator** -  
<https://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/calculator>

**Green Kiddush Guide** -  
<https://hazon.org/resource/green-kiddush-guide/>



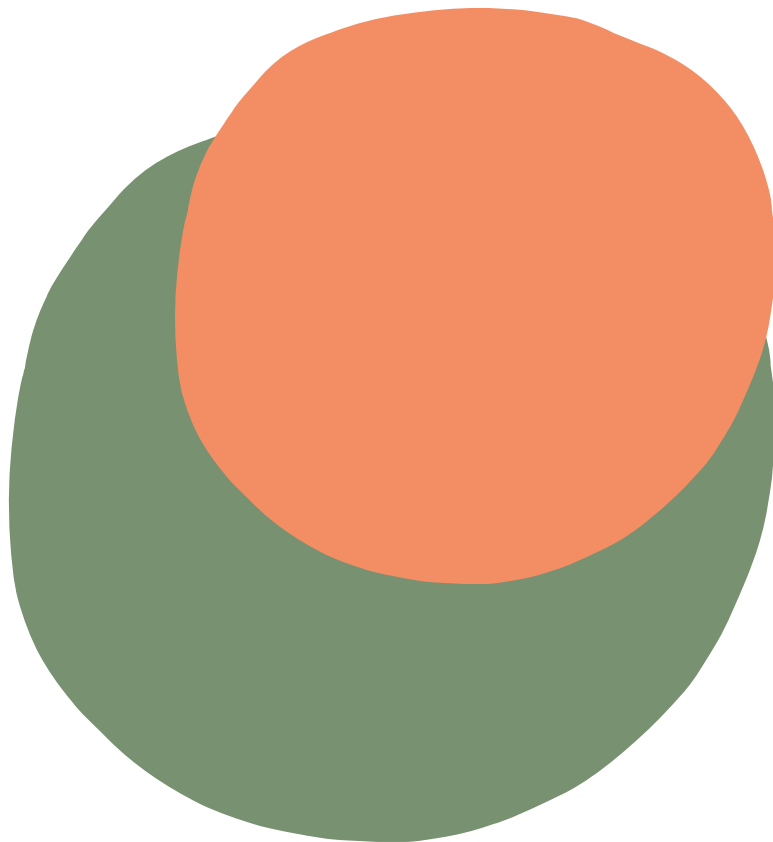
## With Special Thanks:

To Rabbi Nate De'Groot and the Hazon Detroit team who wrote and published the original Hazon Green Shabbat Guide for the Metro Detroit community, which this guide is based upon.

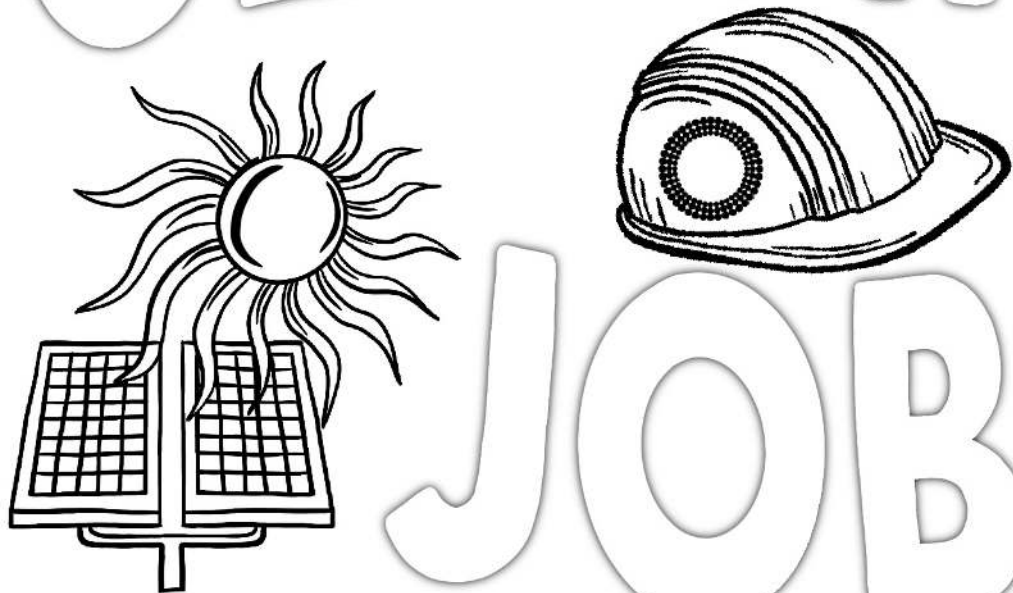
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# CLIMATE



# JOBS



# JUSTICE

a coloring page for your enjoyment