



**Restoring and Transforming the
Ancient Jewish New Year for Animals:**
An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Richard H. Schwartz, PhD

*Author of Judaism and Vegetarianism, Judaism and Global Survival, and
Vegan Revolution: Saving Our World, Revitalizing Judaism.*

Messages of Support from Rabbis and Other Jewish Leaders About Renewing the New Year for Animals and About *Restoring and Transforming the Ancient Jewish New Year for Animals* (listed alphabetically)

Restoring and adapting an ancient Jewish holiday to modern practice may seem like an insurmountable challenge, but many Jews today believe it is possible. The following rabbis and activists not only believe it can be done, but also wholeheartedly endorse the process. Lists of supporting Jewish organizations, rabbis, and influential Jews are in Appendices A, B, and C, respectively.

It is expected that there will be many more supporting statements and endorsements after this book is widely distributed. This will help increase awareness that restoring and transforming the ancient Jewish New Year for Animals is indeed an idea whose time has finally come.

A. Endorsements from Rabbis (listed alphabetically)

“Becoming the people the Torah envisions will only happen through a reassessment of our relationship to animals. Re-Imagining and Re-Vitalizing this ancient tradition is a step in that process that also allows for a Re-Engagement with an authentic expression of Jewish values and ritual.”

—**Rabbi Jonathan Jaffe Bernhard**, Former Executive Director, Shamayim: Jewish Animal Advocacy

“As always, my dear friend Professor Richard Schwartz makes us aware of one of the top priorities in Judaism. May this book have much influence and inspire, and may we all take notice of his important words”—**Rabbi Dr. Nathan Lopes Cardozo**, Dean of the David Cardozo Academy, Jerusalem, and author of many Judaica books, including *Jewish Law as Rebellion: A Plea For Religious Authenticity and Halachic Courage*

“It is a great joy that we should reactivate a day to honor the holy relationship between the human and animal worlds, as per Genesis 1:29 and 1:30, where all of the animal and human species will be restored to a vegan way of life, and with that a new level of peace will unfold on the planet. This is something to bring about and celebrate.”—**Rabbi Gabriel Cousens**, M.D. Director of Tree of Life Foundation and author of many Judaica and health books, including *Torah as a Guide to Enlightenment*

“I applaud this initiative and effort to bring to fruition the awareness that Jewish tradition expects of humanity toward the animal kingdom.”—**Rabbi Adam Frank**, Israeli Masorti rabbi and teacher

“This important work is yet another example of how Richard Schwartz has changed the conversation in the Jewish world around environmental issues and specifically animal welfare. He had the foresight decades ago to see the importance of Jews learning about, as well as applying, ancient Jewish teachings that can help us deal with, and even solve, our planet’s growing list of environmental problems. This book will increase awareness amongst Jews of the strong support Judaism has for compassion for animals and for challenging us to make sure our food choices don’t cause suffering to animals or destruction to the environment. It is an essential read for all Jews living today.”—**Rabbi Akiva Gersh**, the “vegan rabbi,” active blogger, author, and [advocate of] veganism

“Transforming this holiday, which was originally a time to tithe ones flocks, into a day to focus on the treatment of animals on modern farms, provides an excellent educational opportunity. Unlike our farmer/herder ancestors who had daily contact with animals, modern Jews are often completely out of touch with where their food comes from, or how it is produced.”—**Rabbi Yonassan Gershom**, writer and activist; his blog “Notes from a Jewish Thoreau” is at <http://rooster613.blogspot.com>

“It is a beautiful idea to renew/revive a classic day—Rosh Hashanah for counting and giving *ma’aser beheima*—that lost its actual function with the destruction of the Temple and the Exile. Addressing humanity’s relationship to animal life—and the widespread mistreatment of food animals and environmental abuse in today’s economy, marked by industrial farming and animal husbandry—is inspired. I wish great success to this project because it would have a morally positive effect on our treatment of

animals and the planet, and bring great benefits to human health in switching to a healthier diet and life enhancing eating. In this way, the project fulfills and advances the central mitzvah of the Torah: choose life.”—**Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg**, former President of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership; author of *The Jewish way: Living the Holidays* and many other books

“Rosh Chodesh Elul, the Talmudic New Year for Animals, is a wonderful time to reclaim our connection to our brothers and sisters of all species, examine our ethics around treatment of animals, and celebrate the ways humans are and can be in partnership with all life. I, for one, look forward to blessing the animals in a Jewish context!”

—**Rabbi Jill Hammer**, Director of Spiritual Education for the Academy of Jewish Religion (Riverdale, NY)

Israel, the only Jewish state in the world, holds the dubious record of being one of the top two countries for consumption of single-use dishes per capita. We create mountains of plastic every year. This shameful record indicates we have a long way to go in fulfilling our moral call as humans and as Jews l’ovdah u’l’shomrah, to preserve and to sustain creation. I believe Richard Schwartz’s book presents a prophetic call, compelling for an urgent response. I believe it will enter the canon of Jewish texts that resulted in significant changes.”—**Rabbi Dalia Marx**, Professor of Liturgy and Midrash at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem and author of several Judaica books

“The idea to develop the ‘New Year for Animals’ to become a day for raising awareness of human responsibility for animal welfare, is in fact nothing less than an initiative to enhance

our love of the Creator Himself, and is a sanctification of the Divine Name. Professor Richard Schwartz continues with his inspiring and indefatigable efforts to highlight Jewish teachings for compassion towards animal life and the enormously beneficial consequences of such for human welfare. This book presents his latest initiative to highlight the spectrum of our religious ethical obligations towards animal life. In so doing, he gives expression to the most noble values of Jewish teaching to emulate the Divine Attributes, as the Talmud states (Shabbat 133b), ‘just as God is gracious and merciful, so you must be gracious and merciful.’ May his efforts continue to bear fruit to make our world a more compassionate and godly abode for all.”—**Rabbi David Rosen**, KSG, CBE, International Co-President, Religions for Peace; Member of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel’s Commission for Dialogue with Religions; former chief rabbi of Ireland

“There is no greater testament to the creative vision of this generation than the creation of a new day that is also the consecration of a very old day. *Rosh Hashanah Labeheimot* is like *Tu Bishvat* in more than a few ways. Tu Bishvat was a New Year that waited until the 16th century to develop its Kabbalistic wings in the form of a seder, and then took full flight in the first generation of environmental activists, so that now the seder is almost universally observed in the Jewish world. *Rosh Hashanah Labeheimot* has waited even longer, and the need for it has only grown greater and greater, until now that need encompasses the whole planet. So too does our compassion need to encompass the whole planet, all animal life, and the biosphere itself. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero would be proud.”—**Rabbi David Seidenberg**, director of neohasid.org, and author of *Kabbalah and Ecology: God’s Image In This More-Than Human World*

“As the human species—homo not-always-sapiens—turns our attention after a long and disastrous blind spot to the other species that are part of the great ecosystem of Temple Earth, restoring *Rosh Chodesh Elul* as the New Year for Animals will help us refocus on all the many Names of all the many beings that make up *Shmei Rabbah*—the Great Name.”—**Rabbi Arthur Waskow**, PhD, founder and director, The Shalom Center; author of many Judaica books; a long time activist on social justice, peace, and environmental issues

“At this critical time when, on the macro level there is so much we must all do to preserve the world’s biodiversity, and on the micro level we’ve experienced during the pandemic the solace animals can bring, Richard Schwartz’s book, full of commitment, rich in scholarship, and supported with many references, is an essential guide to what Judaism can contribute to one of the biggest issues facing humanity.”—**Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg**, Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism UK. And rabbi of the New North London Synagogue; author of many Judaica books

“The Jewish tradition mandates that we are stewards of all God’s creation. In our day we are increasingly sensitized to suffering of those living creatures in our care; this initiative helps us to recognize our obligation to animals and so helps us be more fully human.”—**Rabbi David Wolpe**, Senior rabbi at Temple Sinai, Los Angeles; author of many Judaica books

“Setting aside only one day—*a single day*—a year to focus on the undervalued significance that animals have in our lives allows us to reflect on the enormity and beauty of

God's creation. A single day each year empowers us to look into our core and go back to the Garden of Eden, the one locale where human and animal resided side by side, where one side didn't dominate the other for gain. In this way, we return to the vision of Paradise, where all are treated with equality, respect, and dignity. That is the way of Torah. That is the way of Creation. That is the way of the Divine. We should hear the call and celebrate the Animal, just as God intended."—**Rabbi Shmuly Yanklowitz**, founder and director of *Shamayim: Jewish Animal Advocacy* and *Uri L'Tzedek: the Orthodox Social Justice Organization*; author of over a dozen books on Jewish values and ethics

B. Statements From Leaders of Jewish Veg, Animal Rights, and Environmental Organizations (listed alphabetically)

“The timing of the New Year for Animals is auspicious and profound. It falls on Rosh Chodesh Elul, when we begin a period of deep introspection, leading up to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. As we examine our actions, the New Year for Animals reminds us that we can all do our part to lessen suffering and violence, to manifest the Divine attribute of compassion, by treating animals as friends, not food.”

—**Jeffrey Cohan**, executive director of Jewish Veg

“We can transform our communal relationship with animals by embracing them as members of our community, understanding the ways in which their welfare is inextricably linked to ours and that of all humans. We can do this first and foremost by implementing more sustainable communal food practices and illuminating connections between issues like worker justice, environmental racism, and pandemic risk, all of which intersect with industrialized animal agriculture. Within our institutions, we can retell the Jewish stories and uncover discussions about animals which historically inspired vibrant religious debate. We can build an ethical framework for engaging in one of the greatest communal acts of *teshuvah* (repentance) of our time: eliminating the factory farm.”—**Melissa Hoffman**, Director of Jewish Initiative for Animals, a project of Farm Forward

“Falling on the first day of the month of Tishrei, Rosh Hashanah tends to get all of the attention as the New Year for years (and all of Creation), but the Jewish calendar actually includes four different New Year days. Tu B'Shvat

marks the New Year for trees, the first of Nissan marks the new year for months, the anniversary of a king's ascent to the throne marks the New Year for kings, and the first of Elul marks the New Year for non-human animals. In a world in which our interaction with non-human animals is dominated by our killing and consumption of them, the New Year for non-human animals calls us to rethink humanity's relationship with our fellow animals with whom we share this precious Earth.”—**David Krantz**, Director of Aytzim: Ecological Judaism

“Restoring the ancient Jewish New Year will elevate the voice of the voiceless, our kin in the creation, who have historically been and remain a vulnerable population whose bodies get imprisoned and invaded without their consent resulting in untold pain and suffering.”—**Risa Mandell**, a clinical social worker who advocates for the protection and rights of other-than-human animals and the planet

“Just as *Tu Bishvat* has been revived as a Jewish Earth Day, *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* is a modern-day reminder of human relationships with animals. Animals provide humans with companionship, and so much more. *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* [LaBeheimot] is a time for us to consider and honor our relationships with *beheimot*, the animals in our lives. The holiday can serve as a chance to remind people of *tza'ar ba'alei hayim*, the prohibition against unnecessary cruelty to animals, to start conversations about animal welfare, and to start taking action to improve the lives of animals around the world.”—**Jakir Manela**, director of Hazon: The Jewish Laboratory for Sustainability

“Let this initiative pave a new path and transform this holiday by filling our lives with compassion rather than old habits. It is a true blessing to celebrate the New Year for Animals with loving and caring for one another devoid of animal suffering. Thank you, Professor Richard Schwartz, for encouraging and inspiring this community to treat animals with kindness, just as God intended.”

—**Adit Romano**, Freedom Farm Sanctuary’s co-founder

“I definitely support the initiative to dedicate Rosh Chodesh Elul to soul-searching regarding our relationship with our fellow creatures in this world. The way animals are treated today in the modern food industries is immoral as well as inconsistent with the halakhic requirements, according to which we must take into account the animals’ physical and emotional needs. The paradox is that everyone knows how to bring evidence of the importance of the mitzvah to prevent animal cruelty such as the prohibition to muzzle an ox while it threshes grain, the demand to help ease the burden off a donkey lying under its burden and the like, but most of those who quote these verses do not translate this important principle into modern reality where a hen cannot move around in her cage nor spread out a wing; The genetic distortions employed to animals in order to increase profitability, cause them to suffer and collapse, and more. It is important that we ask ourselves when was the last time we helped unload a donkey or avoided muzzling an ox while it threshed grain; and when was the last time we seriously considered the question of how we, as individuals and as a society, can prevent animal suffering, since both for man and beast, God wishes

to give a life full of true happiness, as Rabbi Shimshon Rephael Hirsch explains the verse in Psalm 36:7: ‘Man and beast you deliver, o Lord.’”—**Prof. Yael Shemesh**, Bible Department, Bar-Ilan University; Director of the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Center for the Study of Women in Judaism

“The New Years for Animals is like a *heshbon nefashot*—an accounting for all of the souls we, as individuals and as a society, are responsible for. What better way to begin a month of self-reflection and repair than to renew our awareness of ALL of the creatures we are in a direct relationship with (such as our pet cats and dogs), and indirectly, such as the kosher and non-kosher animals that are raised for our consumption, experimented on (ostensibly) for our benefit, shorn and skinned for our clothing, milked for our cereal, and paraded and raced in displays for our entertainment.”—**Aharon Varady**, a pioneer in efforts to restore and transform the ancient holiday and founder and director of the Open Siddur Project

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Lantern Publishing & Media • Woodstock & Brooklyn, NY

2022

Lantern Publishing & Media

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Woodstock, NY 12498

www.lanternpm.org

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FOREWORD

Rabbi David Rosen

The Torah is replete with commandments about the proper treatment of animals, and indeed most rabbinic authorities believe that the prohibition of causing suffering to animals, known in Hebrew as *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*, is an injunction of the Torah and not a later rabbinic interdiction.

In Deuteronomy 13:18 it is written “and He will give you mercy and have mercy on you.” Our sages use this verse to indicate that compassion is an identifying characteristic of authentic Jews, and they declare that “he who has compassion on God’s creatures demonstrates that he is of the seed of Abraham, our Father; and one who does not have compassion on God’s creatures demonstrates that he is not of the seed of Abraham, our Father. (*Betzah* 32b)

The great 16th century Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, known as the *Maharal*, expounds on the idea of “love of God” and states: “Love of all creatures is also love of God, for whoever loves the One God loves all the works He has made. When one loves God, it is impossible not to love His creatures. The opposite is also true. If one hates the

creatures, it is impossible to love God Who created them.”
(*Netivot Olam, Ahavat Hare'a*)

The Torah gives humans permission to consume animal flesh under certain circumstances and restrictions. There were probably times and places where people were not able to obtain enough plant-based nutrients, as opposed to the vast majority of people today. However, many commentators conclude that the Torah's wording demonstrates that this permission is a concession to human weaknesses and negative desires.

The *Baal Haturim* (on Deuteronomy 12:20) points out that this permission is followed by the words “*ki yirchak*,” meaning “when far away,” and states “that is to say that a person should keep far away from eating meat, as it is stated (*Chulin* 84a) ‘a person should not instruct his son to eat meat.’”

Rabbi Joseph Albo in his *Sefer Ha'ikkarim* notes the Talmudic statement (*Kiddushin* 21b) that the permission to eat meat is given due to the fact that “the Torah permits (concessions) for the evil inclination (in humans).”

Many commentators reiterate this idea. The writings of the prominent 19th century–Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook are of particular relevance—specifically, those collected by his close disciple, the Nazir of Jerusalem Rabbi David Hacohen, in a booklet entitled “The Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace.” It includes passages in which Rabbi Kook explains how the commandments relating to *kashrut* (kosher laws) are designed to wean humans away from consuming animal products.

People are less aware of the passionate position against consuming meat expressed by Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik in his article “The emergence of ethical man,” in which he

writes that the permission to eat meat is a concession to the evil inclination and human lust. He refers to the desire to eat meat as an “illicit demand.”

The idea that was designed to inculcate ethical qualities in humans is clearly expressed by Jewish sages, who declare: “What does God care whether a man kills an animal in the proper way and eats it, or whether he strangles an animal and then eats it? Will the one benefit Him or the other injure Him? What does God care whether a man eats kosher or non-kosher animals? . . . But you learn that the commandments were given only to refine God’s creatures, as it says ‘God’s word is refined. It is a protection to those who trust in Him.’” (*Midrash Tanhuma, Parshat Shmini* 15b. Similarly, *Genesis Rabbah, Lech Lecha* 44:1. *Leviticus Rabbah, Shemini* 13:3)

In keeping with this text, Nachmanides emphasizes that the purpose of the *mitzvot* is to improve human character. Concerning the *mitzvah* of *shiluah haken* (driving away the mother bird from its nest before taking the chicks or the eggs. Deuteronomy 22:6), he explains that the purpose of the commandment is precisely to educate us to be compassionate people.

Maimonides (12 c.) had previously highlighted this idea in his *Guide for the Perplexed* (111:17), though, unlike Nachmanides, he believed that animals suffer pain and distress similarly to humans.

This teaching of compassion to animals is accordingly presented in the 15th century Jewish ethical work *Orchot Tzaddikim (Shaar Rachamim)* as central to the authentic Jewish way of life.

The author of the *Torah Temimah* elaborates upon the Talmudic commentary on the above-mentioned verse

from Deuteronomy, namely that he who is not compassionate cannot be of the seed of Abraham. Obviously, this is not a comment about legal status, but rather indicates that being Jewish is about more than simply keeping the letter of the law. Above all, as already stated, Judaism is meant to instill in us the most noble of qualities, compassion being at the very pinnacle. If a person keeps the letter of the law but desecrates its spirit, then in fact he undermines the authentic character of the true love of God that Abraham sought to bring to the world.

Of course, not all Jewish authorities share the above negative views regarding meat consumption. Well known is the statement that “there is no celebration without meat and wine.” However, to be precise, the Talmud states that this was the case when the Temple in Jerusalem was standing and that, since its destruction, celebration is just with wine (*Pesachim* 109a). Moreover, Rabbi Hezkiah Medini, in his encyclopedic work *Sdei Hemed* (under the heading “*basar*” [meat]) cites the many rabbinic authorities who state that this is obviously only the case for those for whom eating meat is truly a pleasure.

However, even for those who are of the opinion that it is still a *mitzvah* to eat meat on Sabbaths and festivals, this would only be valid when the process does not involve flagrant violation of Jewish law (a *mitzvah haba’ah b’aveirah*). The current conditions of livestock (factory) farming involving cruelty on a scale heretofore unknown that desecrates Jewish ethics; the use of massive doses of antibiotics and hormones fed to the animals that are retained in the animal flesh and passed on to humans threatening their health, which Judaism demands that we protect (Deuteronomy 4:9, 15); and the environmental

dangers of the livestock industry in terms of water and land waste, deforestation, and air pollution—which, according to the United Nations research papers, are a cause of climate change greater than all forms of transportation put together and threatening the very Creation that we are meant to protect. Thus, there is little *halachic* justification today for a carnivorous diet, especially when so many plant-based alternatives are available. . . .

Professor Richard Schwartz continues with his inspiring and tireless efforts to highlight Jewish teachings for compassion towards animal life and the enormously beneficial effects of such for human welfare.

This book presents his latest initiative: to use the New Year for Animals, *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, to highlight the spectrum of our religious ethical obligations towards animal life. In so doing, he gives expression to the most noble values of Jewish teaching to emulate the Divine Attributes, as the Talmud states (Shabbat 133b), “just as God is gracious and merciful, so you must be gracious and merciful.” May his efforts continue to bear fruit to make our world a more compassionate and godly abode for all.

Rabbi David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of Ireland: KSG, CBE, International Co-President, Religions for Peace; Member of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel’s Commission for Dialogue with Religions; the American Jewish Committee’s International Director of Interreligious Affairs.

PREFACE:

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

The French writer Victor Hugo famously wrote, “Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come.” There are many reasons why the time has arrived for a restoration of the ancient Jewish New Year for Animals (originally called *Rosh Chodesh L’ma’aser Beheima*—the New Year for the tithing of animals [for sacrifices]), and its transformation into a *Rosh Hashanah LaBheimot*, a day devoted to increasing awareness of Judaism’s teachings about compassion for animals. The horrific realities for animals raised for meat, milk, and eggs and their miserable lives in factory farms, during transport to slaughterhouses, and during the actual slaughtering process itself are very remote from these compassionate and ancient teachings. Some reasons for this initiative, discussed in greater detail in the chapters, include:

- There has been a major increase in the number of plant-based substitutes for meat and other animal products, some with the appearance, texture, and taste so similar to animal products that even long-time meat eaters cannot tell the difference.

- Many Jews and others, especially among the young, have been shifting to vegan diets.
- People are becoming increasingly aware of the seriousness of climate threats and the importance of shifts to vegan diets as an essential part of efforts to avert a climate catastrophe.
- There is increasing recognition of the horrifying conditions for animals in the meat, poultry, seafood, egg, and dairy industries.
- There is increasing understanding within both medical circles and the general public that animal-based diets contribute significantly to heart disease, cancer, strokes, and other life-threatening diseases.
- Animal agriculture causes species extinction and deforestation on a colossal, worldwide scale.
- Animal exploitation contributes significantly to many other environmental threats, including coral reef destruction, water and air pollution, and soil erosion and depletion.
- Industrial animal agriculture involves the very inefficient, wasteful use of land, water, energy, and other resources;
- The massive mistreatment and exploitation of farmed animals also makes future pandemics far more likely.

Because of the above concerns, there have been recent efforts to return the ancient New Year for Animals onto the Jewish agenda. This book is an effort to continue that momentum.

It is essential that the present opportunity for positive changes not be missed because:

- A societal shift toward vegan diets is the only approach that has the potential to avert the looming climate catastrophe. It not only would sharply reduce greenhouse gas emissions because there would be far fewer cows and other farmed ruminants emitting methane, a very potent greenhouse gas. It would also enable the reforestation of farmed land—over a third of the world’s ice-free land area that is currently being used to graze and grow feed crops for animals. This would result in the sequestering of much of the current atmospheric CO₂, bringing it down from its current very dangerous level to a much safer one.
- Animal-based diets and agriculture seriously violate fundamental Jewish teachings on preserving our health, treating animals with compassion, protecting the environment, conserving natural resources, helping hungry people, and pursuing peace.
- Despite the very important considerations above, the vast majority of Jews are unaware of these realities or disregard them and continue to eat meat and other animal products.

It is therefore urgent that this initiative to restore and transform the ancient Jewish New Year for Animals be successful. It would significantly increase awareness of the points mentioned above and would help Jews shift to more healthy and sustainable plant-based diets.

This volume discusses the history of the ancient Jewish New Year, recent efforts to restore it, reasons why the restoration and transformation is so important, and a variety of suggestions for commemorating and celebrating the renewed holiday.

Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Much information and concepts are provided in the appendices to help carry out holiday-related events.

This book is just the beginning of efforts to restore the ancient Jewish holiday. Hopefully, many rabbis and other Jews will make suggestions and take actions that will make this initiative successful. I plan to use such suggestions in later editions of this book.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome and can be sent to me at VeggieRich@gmail.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First I want to thank God for enabling me to write this book by reciting the traditional Jewish blessing for when a Jew reaches an important milestone in their life or that of the Jewish people: “Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this time.”

I want to thank the following people for reading part or all of this volume and making meaningful suggestions: Batzion Shlomi, Rabbi Yonassan Gershom, Jayn Meinhardt, Rabbi David Seidenberg, Yossi Wolfson, Ahaon Varady, and Dr. Irene Lancaster.

I also want to express much appreciation to Brian Normoyle, Pauline Lafosse, and everyone at Lantern Publishing & Media for their wonderful cooperation, strong support, and valuable suggestions.

While everyone’s contributions have been very helpful, I take full responsibility for the material in this book.

Finally, I want to thank in advance all who will read this book and send me suggestions for improvements, so that future editions will be better able to help produce that future ideal time when “no one shall hurt nor destroy in all of [God’s] holy mountain.” (Isaiah 11:9)

THE NEW YEAR FOR ANIMALS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

*[Thanks to Aharon Varady and Rabbi Yonassan Gershom
for material in this section.]*

All Jews know about Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. But many do not know that there are four *Roshei Shanah*, New Year days, in the Jewish tradition. As indicated in the *Mishnah*, *Rosh Hashanah* 1:1:

The first of *Nissan* is the *Rosh HaShanah* (New Year) for [the reigns of] kings and pilgrimage holidays.

The first of *Elul* is the *Rosh HaShanah* for tithing *behemah* [animals, for sacrifices]. Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Shimon say, “The first of *Tishrei*.”

The first of *Tishrei* is the *Rosh HaShanah* for years, *Shmitah* [the sabbatical year], *Yovel* [the jubilee year], 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*].

Only the first of the Hebrew month of Tishrei is a “New Year’s Day” in the sense that we now think of it. The others are more like fiscal year cut-off dates. Similar, for example, to January 1, the cut-off date for the year in which income is to be declared for income tax purposes, although they do not have to be paid until the 15th of April (in the US).

Rosh Chodesh Elul, the first day of the Hebrew month of *Elul*, was the cut-off date for determining in which year an animal could be counted as *ma’aser beheima*, tithing animals suitable for sacrifices. Animals born before that date were tithed in the old year; animals born after that date were tithed in the new year. The tithing of the animals occurred by means of passing animals through a narrow opening in a pen, where every tenth animal was marked with red paint.

Nowadays, very few Jews are raising flocks of animals and, since there has not been a Jerusalem Temple since the year 70 C.E. (when the Romans destroyed it), there have not been Temple sacrifices since that time. Nevertheless, this date remains on the Jewish calendar, although, admittedly, it is not very well known today.

The period of *heshbon hanefesh* (the traditional accounting for one’s relationships and Torah observances during the month of *Elul*) begins on *Rosh Chodesh Elul*. It is the beginning of a month-long period of introspection, during which Jews are to examine their deeds before the high holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Starting on that date and for the entire month of *Elul* (except on Shabbat), the *shofar* (ram's horn) is blown in synagogues during morning services to awaken Jews to their responsibilities. Therefore this date is appropriate for this renewed holiday, when we consider how we can improve conditions for animals.

As New Year for Animals pioneer Aharon Varady expressed it:

What better way to begin a month dedicated to humbling ourselves and repairing our relationships than by reflecting first on our relationship with *beheimot*—the domesticated animals who depend on us for their care and sustenance. The category of *beheimot* includes all animals historically bred by humans as domesticated creatures, both kosher and non-kosher, for example, cats dogs, cows, donkeys, goats, pigs, chicken, and llamas. If we can imagine, empathize, and understand the dependency of *beheimot* in our care, how much better can we realize our relationship with the Holy Blessed One, and the infinite chain of inter-dependencies uniting all living relationships in reflection of this Oneness.

In 2022, *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* occurs from sunset on August 27 to sunset on August 28.

Renewing the New Year for Animals would not be the first time that an ancient Jewish holiday was redefined after the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. *Shavuot*, the “Feast of Weeks,” was originally celebrated with processions of people bringing their first fruits to the Temple. Today, it

focuses on the Jewish people's receiving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, which also took place on the same date.

Tu Bishvat, the New Year for Trees," a day initially intended for tithing fruit trees for Temple offerings, was reclaimed in the 16th Century by mystics in Tzfat, Israel, as a day for healing the natural world. It is now a kind of Jewish Earth Day, when people not only plant trees, but also have Seders (religious gatherings) that involve the eating of many fruits, the reciting of many blessings, and a focus on current environmental issues.

Just as *Shavuot* and *Tu Bishvat* were transformed, it is important that *Rosh Hashana LaBeheimot* (New Year's Day for Animals) be renewed and transformed into a day devoted to increasing awareness of Judaism's powerful teachings on compassion for animals, and to considering a *tikkun* (healing) for the horrible ways that animals are treated today on factory farms and in other settings. This would involve a shift from the original focus of tithing for sacrifices toward learning about how animals are treated on factory farms, comparing that with Jewish teachings about the proper treatment of animals, and considering vegetarianism (and preferably veganism) as a diet more consistent with fundamental Jewish values. Given that most Jews today are urban people who rarely, if ever, have contact with farmers or farmed animals, developing a modern version of this day would also provide a great educational opportunity.

A short video by Breslov chassid Rabbi Yonassan Gershom, who takes care of many cats and chickens on his "hobby farm," provides an excellent summary of the above points.

Beginning in 2009, the festival began to be revived by religious Jewish animal protection advocates and environmental educators to raise awareness of the mitzvah of *tsa'ar ba'alei chaim*, the source texts informing Jewish ethical relationships with domesticated animals, and the lived experience of animals impacted by human needs, especially in the modern industrial meat industry.

Informal celebrations of *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* began that year at the goat barn of Adamah Farm on the campus of the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Connecticut. It included a blessing for assembled farm and pet animals, and a meditation on beginning the period of *cheshbon hanefesh*, with a personal accounting of all the domesticated animals relied upon, followed by the shofar blast for *Rosh Chodesh Elul*.

During this time, Sarah Chandler and Rabbi Jill Hammer created a blessing and ritual for the occasion and Aharon Varady posted a source sheet, hoping it would in the very least begin to spark others' imaginations. He also set up a Facebook page and a Facebook event page.

Activists have reached out to synagogues and Jewish food, environment, and animal protection organizations, in order to raise the profile of the holiday in Jewish communities and raise awareness about the conditions of domesticated animals in contemporary society.

In 2012, the first guided ritual communal meals for *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* were held at the Ginger, the Israeli Jewish Vegetarian Society center in Jerusalem and in major cities across the United States. Jewish Vegetarians of North America (now renamed Jewish Veg) held such an event at the Caravan of Dreams restaurant in Manhattan,

led by me, and Prof. Dan Brook led a similar event in the Bay Area of California.

Yossi Wolfson, coordinator of the Israeli Jewish Vegetarian Society described the events in Jerusalem:

We had two different events to observe the New Year for Animals. The first took the form of a *Tu Bishvat* Seder. We had a special *Haggadah* (in Hebrew), a compilation of texts relating to respecting animals and protecting them. The texts were from the Jewish heritage—starting with the Bible, continuing with commentators of different generations, and ending with 20th century rabbis.

Between the texts, we had four cups of wine (or grape juice) symbolizing different types of animals: fish, reptiles/amphibians, birds, and mammals. The Seder plate included plant equivalents of meats, cheese and mayonnaise—a silent reminder of the ways we exploit animals, and at the same time a reminder of the possibility of liberating ourselves from these oppressive relations.

It was an exciting night. Not only was it a first-ever ceremony of the New Year for Animals, it brought together such a varied group of people: Ultra orthodox (Chareidim) from the group BeHemla; Zionist-religious people; and non-observant Jews. We had two new immigrants from the US and from Uruguay, and Hebrew and English speakers of all ages. Discussions and singing continued far after midnight.

These events were reinforced by several media articles in 2012. My article, “An Audacious Initiative to Restore

the Ancient New Year For Animals,” was in the August 8 *Tikkun* magazine. My article, “Animal Rights and Jewish Law: Restoring and Transforming an Ancient Holiday,” was in the August 1 *Haaretz* and my article, “An overlooked mitzvah: Tsa’ar ba’alei chaim,” was in the August 19 *Jerusalem Post*. “New Year For Animals: The Time Has Come” by Jeffrey Cohan, Executive Director of Jewish Veg, was in the August 15 *Jewish Forward*. Pauline Dubkin Yearwood’s article, “At the New Year, let’s give animals a new Jewish chance,” was in the *Chicago Jewish News* on August 14.

Aharon Varady’s article, “Rosh Chodesh Elul: Jewish New Year For Animals,” was published by Hazon: Jewish Lab for Sustainability, on August 5, 2013. Rabbi Shmuly Yanklowitz’s article, “The Lost New Year: Celebrating the Animals,” was in the August 7, 2017 *NY Jewish Week*.

Several prominent rabbis have lent their support to reviving the holiday, including David Rosen, Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, Nathan Lopes Cardozo, David Wolpe, and Adam Frank. Appendix B has a list of supporting rabbis, and Appendices A and C have lists of supporting Jewish organizations and organizational leaders and other activists, respectively.

More recently, there have been several events commemorating the renewed New Year for Animals. I moderated Zoom events in both 2020 and 2021, one in the US and one in Israel, during which leading Jewish veg and animal rights activists spoke, and another Zoom event at which participants read and discussed the Jewish quotations about animals in Appendix D.

These Zoom events received very positive media coverage. “Renewing the ancient New Year for

Animals—with a vegan twist,” was in the August 13, 2020 ‘In Jerusalem’ section of the *Jerusalem Post*. It can be read here: <https://www.jpost.com/judaism/renewing-the-ancient-new-year-for-animals-with-a-vegan-spind-638482>. An article about 2021’s planned activities, “A new year for animals?” was in the August 9 issue of the *Jerusalem Report*. It can be read here: <https://jewcology.org/2021/07/a-new-year-for-animals-article-by-abigail-klein-leichner-in-the-august-9-jerusalem-report/>.

In conclusion, there has been significant momentum in popularizing the idea that the ancient Jewish New Year for Animals should be renewed and transformed. It is hoped that this book will build on this momentum and make the renewed holiday far better known and celebrated in Jewish communities.

It might not be an exaggeration to assert that the future of humanity and, indeed, all life on earth, depend on it.

REASONS TO RESTORE AND TRANSFORM THE ANCIENT JEWISH NEW YEAR FOR ANIMALS

Below are ten important reasons why renewing and transforming the ancient Jewish holiday as a *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* (a New Year for Animals) is an idea whose time has come:

1. Observing the holiday would increase awareness of Judaism's powerful teachings about compassion for animals. These include:
 - a. "God's compassion is over all His works [including animals] (Psalms 145:9);
 - b. "the righteous person considers the lives of his or her animals" (Proverbs 12:10);
 - c. the great Jewish leaders Moses and King David were deemed suitable to be leaders because of their compassionate care of sheep when they were shepherds (*Exodus Rabbah* 2:2);
 - d. farmers are not to yoke a strong and a weak animal together (Deuteronomy 22:10) nor to muzzle an

- animal while the animal is threshing in the field (Deuteronomy 25:4);
- e. The Ten Commandments indicate that animals, as well as people, are to rest on the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:8 - 10; Deuteronomy 5:12 - 14);
 - f. and much more, summarized in the Torah mandate that Jews are to avoid *tsha'ar ba'alei chaim*, causing any unnecessary “sorrow to animals.” Many more Jewish teachings about compassion for animals can be found in Appendix D.

Many religious Jews are properly diligent in “building fences” around some *mitzvot*. For example, there is great care on the part of religious Jews to fulfill the laws related to removing *chametz* (foods with leavening agents that are forbidden on the Jewish holiday of Passover) before that holiday. But other *mitzvot*, including *tsha'ar ba'alei chaim*, are often downplayed or ignored.

Perhaps this is not surprising when one considers that, with regard to animals, the primary focus of Jewish religious services, Torah readings, and education are on the biblical sacrifices, animals that are kosher for eating, and laws about animal slaughter—with relatively little time devoted to Judaism’s more compassionate teachings related to animals.

It is essential that this emphasis on the killing and sacrifice of animals be balanced with a greater consideration of Judaism’s more compassionate teachings about animals. Hence the need to restore and transform the ancient, long forgotten Jewish holiday into a *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot*, a New Year for Animals.

2. Observing the renewed holiday would increase awareness about the massive, widespread horrific treatment of animals on factory farms, and thereby lead to dietary changes that would help reduce that mistreatment. Some examples are:

- a. Egg-laying hens are kept in cages so small that they can't raise even one wing and they are debeaked without anesthetic or pain killer to prevent them from harming other birds due to pecking from frustration in their very unnatural conditions.
- b. Male chicks at egg-laying hatcheries fare even worse, as they are killed almost immediately after birth, as they can't lay eggs and have not been genetically programmed to produce much flesh.
- c. Dairy cows are artificially impregnated annually on what the industry calls "rape racks" so that they will be able to continue "giving" milk, and their babies are taken away almost immediately, often to be raised under terrible conditions to produce veal.
- d. Nine billion land animals in the United States and about 80 billion animals worldwide are slaughtered annually after being raised under very cruel conditions on modern factory farms, where all of their natural instincts are thwarted.

3. As Jews became more aware of the major inconsistencies of animal-based diets with Jewish teachings about preserving human health, protecting the environment, conserving natural resources, and helping hungry people, many Jews would shift to plant-based diets.

4. A shift toward plant-based diets would also reduce the great threat posed by climate change. The almost daily news of severe, sometimes record-breaking, heat waves, droughts, wildfires, storms, and floods indicate that the world is rapidly approaching a climate catastrophe. These severe events are occurring after a temperature increase of slightly more than one degree Celsius (about two degrees Fahrenheit) since the start of the industrial revolution. Climate experts are predicting an increase of as much as three degrees Celsius by the end of this century, and that could come much sooner because self-reinforcing positive feedback loops could result in a tipping point, when climate spins out of control, with catastrophic consequences.

Bottom line: the very existence of human life is threatened, so averting a climate catastrophe must become a “central organizing principle” for humanity today. A major part of these efforts must be striving to very significantly reduce meat consumption, as soon as possible.

Reducing the consumption of meat and other animal products is the best approach to averting a climate catastrophe. A 2006 report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, “Livestock’s Long Shadow,” indicated that animal-based agriculture emits more greenhouse gases (in CO₂ equivalents) than are emitted by all the cars, planes, ships, and all other means of transportation worldwide *combined*. In a cover story, “Livestock and Climate Change,” in a 2009 issue of *World Watch* magazine, two environmentalists associated with the World Bank argued that the livestock sector is responsible for at least 51 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. A major reason for this huge contribution to climate change is the large amounts of

methane, a very potent greenhouse gas, emitted by cattle and other farmed ruminants.

A position paper, “Animal Agriculture is the Leading Cause of Climate Change,” by systems engineer Sailesh Rao concluded that a shift to plant-based diets would, in effect, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 87%. His analysis considered that reduced meat production would not only reduce methane emissions, but would also enable much of the over a third of the world’s ice-free land—currently used for grazing and growing feed crops for animals—to return to its mostly forested previous state. This would result in the sequestering of much of the atmospheric CO₂, bringing it down from its current, very dangerous level of about 420 parts per million (ppm) to a much safer level below 350 ppm, and thus greatly reduce the threat of a climate catastrophe.

5. Decreasing consumption of meat and other animal-based foods would also reduce many additional environmental problems, including deforestation, soil erosion, rapid species losses, desertification, acidification of oceans, and air and water pollution.

6. Shifting away from animal-based agriculture would also reduce hunger and thirst worldwide. While an estimated nine million people die of hunger and its effects annually worldwide and over 10 percent of the world’s people are chronically hungry, about 70 percent of the grain produced in the United States and about 40 percent of the grain produced worldwide is fed to animals destined for slaughter. Additionally, feeding a person on an animal-based diet requires up to 13 times more water, largely for

irrigating land to produce feed crops, than a person on a vegan diet.

7. Renewing the ancient holiday would show that Jews are applying Judaism's eternal teachings about compassion, health, justice, and environmental sustainability to today's critical issues. This is needed as never before, as the world approaches a potential climate catastrophe, severe food, water, and energy scarcities, and other environmental disasters.

8. By reinforcing a compassionate side of Judaism, the New Year for Animals would improve Judaism's image among people concerned about vegetarianism and veganism, animal welfare, the environment, and related issues.

9. Reclaiming a holiday that they can more closely relate to and find relevant, meaningful, and appealing would also help bring back many Jews who currently feel alienated from Judaism. It would also strengthen the commitment of vegetarian and vegan Jews—and other Jews concerned about animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and related issues—who are already involved in Jewish life. They would be inspired, knowing that the Jewish community is recognizing that the production and consumption of meat and other animal products seriously violate basic Jewish mandates to preserve human health, treat animals with compassion, protect the environment, conserve natural resources, help hungry people, and pursue peace.

10. Seeking ways to creatively make the renewed/transformed holiday meaningful and enjoyable would help revitalize Judaism. This has already happened with another ancient New Year, Tu Bishvat—the New Year for Trees—which has been renewed and transformed into a kind of Jewish Earth Day.

In summary, restoring and transforming the ancient Jewish holiday is a win-win-win-win situation, better for individuals today, future generations, animals, and our imperiled planet.

WAYS OF COMMEMORATING AND CELEBRATING *ROSH* *HASHANAH LABEHEIMOT*

The previous two chapters discussed (1) the history of the ancient New Year for Animals and recent efforts to restore and transform it and (2) reasons why restoring and transforming the holiday are so important. This chapter provides suggestions on how the renewed/transformed Jewish holiday can be commemorated and celebrated.

Since we are trying to restore an ancient holiday and transform it from its original purpose of tithing animals for sacrifices, there is no single established way to commemorate it. Hopefully, different Jewish congregations, schools, community centers, and families will adapt approaches that best suit them, as the restored holiday continues to be developed. I would very much welcome learning about people's ideas and experiences (email me at VeggieRich@gmail.com), so that future editions of this book will be more helpful in guiding people in planning and carrying out future commemorations.

Below are some possibilities, starting with the simplest ones. For suggestions on organizing and carrying out any of the proposed activities, please feel free to contact me.

A. A Rabbinic Sermon

Complimentary PDFs of this complete book and my other book, *Vegan Revolution: Saving Our World, Revitalizing Judaism*, will be emailed to many rabbis and other influential Jews throughout the world, with the hope that many of them will use it as a basis for sermons or other holiday events. The material in the previous two chapters, the preface, and the appendices—especially Appendix D, with its many quotations about Jewish teachings about compassion for animals—should also be helpful for rabbinic sermon preparations.

B. A Class Presented by a Rabbi or Other Knowledgeable Jew

The discussion above applies in this case as well.

C. Talk By Zoom or in Person by a Rabbi or Other Knowledgeable Jew

Once again, the discussion above for a rabbinic sermon applies here. Having a Zoom event provides the possibility of a much larger audience, and it can be recorded to later be posted on social media, allowing even more people to view it.

D. Interview of a Person Knowledgeable about the Issues.

Appropriate interviewees can be obtained using links to veg, animal rights, and environmental organizations in Appendix F.

E. A Dialogue, Group Discussion, or Debate

This enables the sharing of different perspectives. Again, the abundance of resources in the appendices,

especially the many Jewish quotations related to Jewish teachings on animals in Appendix D should be very valuable for preparations.

Especially relevant I think is my article “A Dialogue Between a Jewish Vegan Activist and a Rabbi,” which can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3oKczBh>, and my Jerusalem Report cover story in the August 9, 2021 *Jerusalem Report*, “Why Jews Should Be Vegans,” which can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3zo5NpU>. I also had an article on “Why Jews should be vegans” in the *Jerusalem Post* on February 17, 2022. It can be read online, with the title “All Jews should be vegan: Here are six reasons why” here: <https://bit.ly/3PKwQmd>.

F. A festive meal, with several *divrei Torah* on Jewish teachings on compassion to animals, why it is important that the ancient Jewish New Year for Animals be restored and transformed, and other related issues.

This provides an opportunity for many personal conversations and for a variety of ideas to be shared by several presenters.

Some suggestions include: Provide plant-based meat alternatives to show people many options are available and delicious. During the meal, hold a guided discussion regarding the connection of Jewish values to animal welfare. Discuss how the ways in which animals are treated today within the food industry do not align with Jewish ideals.

G. Play Acting

An example of this is the “Council of All Beings,” a kind of play/ritual proposed by Rabbi David Mevarach

Seidenberg, during which participants take on the role of an animal, or the spirit representative of some habitat or aspect of the Council of All Beings natural world, and discuss how human beings are affecting them. It is a powerful activity for developing mindful awareness that can lead us to renew our sense of responsibility for our actions that impact the lives and homes of all the creatures and communities we share this precious world with.

Rabbi Seidenberg has put up a Jewish-related presentation of it on his website: here: <http://www.neohasid.org/stoptheflood/council/>.

H. Blessing of the Animals

Rabbi Jill Hammer, who conducted such an event in 2010, stressed the value of such an event:

We have become tyrants on this planet, using its resources and other inhabitants for ourselves. Before we can make amends to one another at the New Year for Animals, we must first make amends to the vulnerable creatures who live among us. As we hear the cry of the shofar for the first time this year, may we also hear the cry of all life. May we be guided to protect the Earth and make room for other creatures to thrive.

We bless the creatures we are privileged to live with on Earth: the loving companion animals who live in our homes, the birds in the air, the burrowing creatures under our feet, the fish in the waters, the wild animals on land, and the billions of animals confined by the livestock industry waiting for

slaughter. May we bless all living beings that we love, strengthening and protecting them.

The following blessing can be recited at the event:

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, meshaneh haberiyot.

Blessed is the Eternal Being, Spirit of the Universe, in a world of many kinds of creatures.

At the end of the ceremony, the *shofar* (ram's horn) is blown, a single *tekiyah* (blast).

[Note that for *hiddur mitzvah* (the enhancement of the mitzvah), it would be best, as with other rituals involving animals, that the ram's horn come from an animal that was not cruelly treated and died a natural death.]

I. A Seder

Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot is patterned, to some extent, after *Rosh Hashanah La'llanot* (the New Year for Trees) *Tu Bishvat*. Since that holiday has a Seder as a central feature of its celebration, some Jewish groups might want to create a Seder for the New Year for Animals.

Like the Passover Seder, the *Tu Bishvat* Seder involves the drinking of four cups of wine or grape juice. For Passover, the four cups represent four promises by God of the redemption of the Israelites; for *Tu Bishvat*, they represent the four Kabbalistic worlds and the four changing seasons from winter to fall, represented by changing the colors of the wine or grape juice from white to pink to ruby to red.

Therefore, one possibility is to have a *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* Seder also divided into four parts separated by the drinking of four cups of wine or grape juice.

One possible approach follows:

Before cup one, discuss Jewish teachings on compassion for animals. The many quotations in Appendix D, Rabbi David Rosen's discussion about Jewish teachings about compassion for animals in the foreword, and several books listed in the Bibliography would be very helpful for this segment.

Before cup two, discuss how animals are being mistreated today, very contrary to Jewish teachings. While, as considered in the previous chapter, Judaism has very strong teachings on compassion for animals, the realities for animals differ substantially from these teachings.

The following story by Dr. Michael Klaper, the author of books such as *Vegan Nutrition: Pure and Simple* and *Pregnancy, Children, and the Vegan*, dramatically illustrates the cruelty of the dairy industry:

The very saddest sound in all my memory was burned into my awareness at age five on my uncle's dairy farm in Wisconsin. A cow had given birth to a beautiful male calf. The mother was allowed to nurse her calf but for a single night. On the second day after birth, my uncle took the calf from the mother and placed him in the veal pen in the barn—only ten yards away, in plain view of the mother. The mother cow could see her infant, smell him, hear him, but could not touch him, comfort him, or nurse him. The heartrending bellows that she

poured forth—minute after minute, hour after hour, for five long days—were excruciating to listen to. They are the most poignant and painful auditory memories I carry in my brain. Since that age, whenever I hear anyone postulate that animals cannot feel emotions, I need only to replay that torturous sound in my memory of that mother cow crying her bovine heart out to her infant. Mother's love knows no species barriers, and I believe that all people who are vegans in their hearts and souls know that to be true.

Nine billion animals in the U.S. alone are slaughtered annually after being raised under very cruel conditions on modern factory farms, where all of their natural instincts are thwarted.

Many more examples can be given.

More information about the mistreatment of animals can be found in several books listed in the Bibliography, as well as in the section on animals at JewishVeg.org/Schwartz. Also, the last section of quotations about animals in Appendix D has quotations about the mistreatment of animals.

Seder participants can be asked to research examples of animal abuse and to give a brief talk about it at the Seder.

Some questions that could be addressed during this part of the Seder, even though they may be upsetting to some people, include:

Since Jews are to be *rachmanim b'nei rachmanim* (compassionate children of compassionate ancestors), can we as Jewish consumers, kosher or not, justify the cruelty of

factory farms to mass-produce meat that we do not really need for nourishment? Can we justify the force-feeding of ducks and geese to create *foie gras*? Can we justify the horrible treatment of hens and dairy cows, mentioned above? Can we justify artificially inseminating turkeys to get fertile, hatching eggs because the birds have been bred to get so fat they can no longer mate naturally? Can we justify the many other ways that animals are unnecessarily exploited and mistreated in our society to meet consumer's claimed needs?

The kosher industry tends to focus only on the actual moment of slaughter, and the packing and preparation of the meat afterward. Very little, if any, attention is paid to how the animals are treated *before* slaughter. One has to wonder if this can be reconciled with *kashrut*, because *kashrut* is designed to be humane. But how can it be humane if most kosher meat, dairy, and eggs come from the same abominable factory farm conditions as does non-kosher food? Shouldn't we be concerned—indeed, alarmed—about the ways that food is being produced?

Aharon Varady, a pioneer in restoring the New Year for Animals, put our relationships with animals into perspective:

When the second Temple stood [before 70 C.E., when it was destroyed by the Romans], the *Rosh Hashanah L'ma'aser LaBeheimot* [the New Year for tithing Animals, as the ancient holiday was then called] celebrated one means by which Jews then believed that we elevated and esteemed the special creatures that helped us to live and to work. Just as rabbinic Judaism replaced our Temple offerings with

tefillot—prayers—so too the restored *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* challenges us to realize the holiness of the animals in our care in a time without tithes.

The restored/transformed New Years Day for Animals is a challenge to remind us of our responsibilities to animals who depend on us for their welfare. Are we treating them correctly and in accord with the mitzvah of *tsa'ar ba'alei chayim*—sensitivity to the suffering of living creatures? Have we studied and understood the depth of *chesed*—loving kindness—expressed in the breadth of Torah teachings concerning the welfare of animals?

Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot is the day to reflect on our relationships with domesticated animals, to recognize our personal responsibilities to them, individually and as part of a distinct and holy people, and to repair our relationships with them, to the best of our abilities.

Before cup three, discuss what Jewish groups are doing in order to reduce animal abuses. Appendix F discusses and provides links to several Jewish veg, animal rights, and environmental organizations.

Before cup four, discuss what attendees can do to help increase awareness of Jewish teachings about compassion to animals and how to apply these teachings toward the creation of a more humane, compassionate, just, peaceful, and environmentally sustainable world. Appendix H, which provides many tips for promoting animal rights and veganism, should be very helpful here.

One possibility, if a Seder leader is knowledgeable about it, is to emulate the kabbalistic version of the *Tu*

Bishvat Seder. That would involve the wine or grape juice cups representing the four seasons. The first cup would be white, representing winter; the second cup would be white with a small amount of red, representing spring; the third cup would be about half white and half red, representing the summer, and the fourth cup would be almost all red, with just a small amount of white, representing autumn.

The kabbalists regarded the four cups of wine or grape juice as representing four worlds, each of which brought people closer to God: *Asiyah* (the world of action); *Yetzirah* (the world of formation); *Beriah* (the world of creation); and *Atzilut*, the world of emanation.

Different types of fruits, associated with the four kabbailistic worlds, would be eaten after each cup of wine was drunk. After the first cup, fruits with hard outer shells but soft insides, such as pomegranates, nuts, oranges, and tangerines would be eaten; after the second cup, fruits with hard inner pits and soft outsides, such as dates, olives, peaches, and nectarines would be eaten; after the third cup, fruits with neither a hard outer shell or a hard inner pit, such as figs, raisins, and apples would be eaten. There is no other type of fruit, so after the fourth cup, spices that have a smell but no taste could be smelled.

More suggestions about foods for a Seder are in Appendix I.

Other approaches are possible, and one is as follows

Before cup one, discuss mammals and how they are mistreated on factory farms, and how they are being affected by climate change.

Before cup two, consider birds and how they are mistreated on factory farms.

Before cup three, discuss fishes and other sea creatures and how they are mistreated both on aquatic factory farms and in the seas and affected by climate change.

Before cup four, discuss how insects are affected by climate change, the threats of species extinctions, and how declining insect populations will affect future agriculture.

If this approach was used, it could provide an opportunity to discuss the current mass loss of biodiversity. We are now in what environmentalists consider the “Sixth Extinction.” They estimate that the current extinction rate is between 1,000 and 10,000 times higher than the natural extinction rate, and that humans are primarily responsible. Unfortunately, as discussed previously, even human beings are threatened by extinction, due to the effects of a rapidly warming planet.

Making this approach successful might require participants to do some research before the event, so that it does not involve an active leader and completely passive others.

Still another approach is as follows:

Before cup one, discuss the mistreatment of animals on factory farms.

Before cup two, discuss the mistreatment of animals in laboratories for animal experiments.

Before cup three, discuss the mistreatment of animals at circuses, rodeos, and other entertainment venues.

Before cup four, discuss the mistreatment of animals via hunting and trapping.

So that this approach is not all negative, some stories about the lives of animals and the many benefits they provide the world could be interspersed into the discussions.

As indicated in Chapter 1, A *Haggadah* for a *Rosh Chodesh LaBeheimot* event produced by the Jewish Veg Society of Israel (in Hebrew) can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3QeFj0D>. It was written by Israeli activist Inbal Cohen.

Tips on conducting a meaningful, successful Seder are in Appendix I.

For suggestions on any aspect of this book and offers to help restore and transform the ancient holiday, please contact me at VeggieRich@gmail.com.

Appendix A.

List of Jewish Organizations Supporting the Renewal and Transformation of *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot*

Aytzim: Ecological Judaism, Parent organization of: EcoJews,
Green Zionist Alliance, Jewcology.org, Jews of the Earth,
and Shomrei Breishit: Rabbis and Cantors for the Earth
(aytzim.org)

Bread and Torah Project (BreadandTorah.org)

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL).
(coejl.org)

Concern for Helping Animals in Israel (chai.org.il)

EcoJews (jewcology.org/initiative/ecojews/)

Freedom Farm Sanctuary (Freedom-Farm.org.il)

Hakol Chai (chai.org.il)

Hazon: The Jewish Lab for Sustainability (hazon.org)

Green Zionist Alliance (aytzim.org/greenisrael)

Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development
(interfaithsustain.com)

Jewcology (jewcology.org)

Jewish Veg, formerly Jewish Vegetarians of North America
(JewishVeg.org)

Jewish Vegetarian Society of Israel. (ginger.org.il)

Jewish Vegetarian Society of the UK. (jvs.org.uk)

Jews of the Earth (aytzim.org/jote)

Neohasid (NeoHasid.org)

Shamayim: Jewish Animal Advocacy (shamayim.us)

Shomrei Breishit: Rabbis and Cantors for the Earth (aytzim.org)

Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center (TreeOfLife.mn.co)

Appendix B.

List of Rabbis Supporting the Renewal and Transformation of *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot*

Katy Z. Allen, Staff Chaplain, Brigham and Women's Hospital.
Lester Bronstein is immediate past president of the New York
Board of Rabbis; rabbi of Bet Am Shalom in White Plains,
New York since 1989; on the board of T'ruah: A Rabbinic
Call for Human Rights.

Howard A Cohen, Congregation *Shirat Hayam* in Marshfield
MA; creator and director of Burning Bush Adventures, a
program that has combined wilderness travel with Judaism
for 30 years; deputy chief and chaplain of the Bennington
Fire Department for the past 20 years.

Michael Cohen, teacher of Bible and the Environment at the
Arava Institute for Environmental Studies; teacher of courses
on Conflict Resolution and the Bible at Bennington College.
Gabriel Cousens, M.D., Director of Tree of Life Foundation
and author of *Torah as a Guide to Enlightenment*.

Ariel Edery, Beth Shalom, Cary NC.

Yehoshua Engelman, psychoanalyst.

Adam Frank, Israeli Masorti teacher and lecturer.

Akiva Gersh, the "vegan rabbi," active blogger, author, and
speaker about veganism.

Yonassan Gershom, writer and activist; his blog "Notes from
a Jewish Thoreau" can be read here: [http://rooster613.
blogspot.com/](http://rooster613.blogspot.com/)

Prof. David Golinkin, President of The Schechter Institutes,
INC. and rabbi in Jerusalem.

Irrving (Yitz) Greenberg, former President of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership; author of *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*.

David Mivasair, Ahavat Olam Synagogue, Emeritus, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Linda Motzkin, Co-director of the Bread and Torah project.

Yonatan Neril, Founder and Executive Director of the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development in Israel and co-editor of *Eco Bible*.

Arnold Rachlis, University Synagogue, Irvine, CA.

David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of Ireland: KSG, CBE, International Co-President, Religions for Peace; Member of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's Commission for Dialogue with Religions; the American Jewish Committees International Director of Interreligious Affairs.

Jonathan Rubenstein, co-director of the Bread and Torah project.

Amy Sapowith, *Beth Chaverim* Reform Congregation, Ashburn, VA.

Sid Schwartz, Founding Rabbi, *Adat Shalom* Reconstructionist Congregation, Bethesda, MD. Author of *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Future*.

David Seidenberg, director of neohasid.org, and author of *Kabbalah and Ecology: God's Image In This More-Than Human World*.

Gerald Serotta, director emeritus of Interfaith Council of Metropolitan, Washington.

Yedidya (Julian) Sinclair, consultant to Israeli hi-tech startup companies; author of a book on Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook's great work on *shmita: Shabbat Ha'aretz*.

Daniel Swartz, Spiritual Leader, Temple Hesed; Executive Director, Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life.

Arthur Waskow, Director of the Shalom Center; author of many Judaica books.

APPENDIX B.

Jonathan Wittenberg, Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism, UK., and Rabbi of the New North London Synagogue; author of many Judaica books.

David Wolpe, Temple Sinai, Los Angeles; author of many books and articles in Jewish publications like *The Jewish Week* and *The Jerusalem Post*.

Shmuly Yanklowitz, founder and director of the Shamayim V'Aretz Institute: Promoting Jewish Veganism & Animal Welfare; author of over a dozen books on Jewish values and ethics

Rain Zohav, Director, JOTE- Jews of the Earth, a project of Aytzim.

Appendix C.

List of Jewish Activists Supporting the Renewal and Transformation of *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot*

Syd Baumel, former Editor of *The Aquarian*, a forum for shedding light on the path to personal fulfillment.

Lara Balsam, former Director of UK-based Jewish Vegetarian Society.

Jeremy Benstein, The Heschel Sustainability Center, Tel Aviv, Israel; author of *The Way Into Judaism and the Environment*.

Beth Berkowitz, Chair of Jewish Studies and Professor of Religion, Barnard College.

Dan Brook, PhD, Professor of Sociology at San Jose State University; author of *An Alef Bet Kabbalah* and *Eating the Earth*; maintainer of vegan-based websites.

Jeffrey Spitz Cohan, Director of Jewish Veg.

Lionel Friedberg, multi-award-winning cinematographer, producer, editor, and writer; producer of the Jewish Vegetarians of North America documentary “A Sacred Duty: Applying Jewish Values to Help Heal the World.”

A.J. Frost, Senior Director of Operations/Assistant to the President & Dean of Valley Beit Midrash.

Roberta Kalechofsky, PhD, author or editor of many books, including *Jewish Vegetarianism*, *Rabbis and Vegetarianism*, and *Judaism and Animal Rights*; founder and director of Jews for Animal Rights.

Lori Kirshner, President of Advancing the Interests of Animals (AIA), which she founded in 2001; host of “Animals Today,” a nationally syndicated radio show and podcast.

- David Krantz, President of Aytzim: Ecological Judaism.
- Miriam Maisel, MD, family practitioner with an emphasis on nutrition and lifestyle.
- Risa M. Mandel, a clinical social worker who advocates for the protection and rights of other-than-human animals and the planet.
- Nina Natelson, founder and director of Concern for Helping Animals in Israel (CHAI).
- Becky O'Brien, director of food and climate for Hazon: The Jewish Lab for Sustainability.
- Lewis Regenstein, author of *Commandments of Compassion: Jewish Teachings on Protecting the Planet and Its Creatures, Replenish the Earth*, and other writings on Judaism and animals.
- Sahar Riemer, a leader of the Israeli animal rights organization Animals Today.
- Adit Romano, co-founder of Freedom Farm Sanctuary.
- Nigel S. Savage, founder and former long-time President & CEO of Hazon: The Jewish Lab for Sustainability.
- Richard H. Schwartz, PhD, president emeritus of Jewish Veg; author of *Vegan Revolution: Saving Our World, Revitalizing Judaism*, and *Judaism and Vegetarianism*.
- Yael Shemesh, Professor of Bible at Bar Ilan University.
- Peter Spiegel, Vice President and Secretary of Advancing the Interests of Animals (AIA); producer and co-host of the radio show "Animals Today."
- Isaac Thomas, Founder and CEO of Vegan Nation.
- Jeffrey Tucker, director of the Florida chapter of Earth Save.
- Aharon Varady, community planner & Jewish educator; founding director, the Open Siddur Project.
- Jonathan Wolf, founder of Jewish Vegetarians of North America; co-founder of L'Olam: The Jewish Environmental Network; executive director of Yashar: The Institute for Jewish Activism.
- Yossi Wolfson, coordinator of the Israeli Jewish Vegetarian Society.

Appendix D.

Jewish Quotations About Animals and How Animals Are Treated Today

A. Attitude Toward Animals

1. “A righteous person regards the life of his or her animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” *Proverbs* 12:10
2. “The Lord is good to all and His compassion is over all His works.” *Psalms* 145:9
3. “The *tzaddik* [righteous person] acts according to the laws of justice; not only does he act according to these laws with human beings, but also with animals.” The *Malbim*
4. “Living creatures possess a soul and a certain spiritual superiority which in this respect make them similar to those who possess intellect [people] and they have the power of affecting their welfare and their food and they flee from pain and death.” Nachmanides, commentary on *Genesis* 1:29
5. “There is no difference between the pain of humans and the pain of other living beings, since the love and tenderness of the mother for the young are not produced by reasoning, but by feeling, and this faculty exists not only in humans but in most living beings.” Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*
6. “For that which befalls the sons of men befalls animals; even one thing befalls them; as the one dies, so dies the other; yes, they all have one breath; so that man has no preeminence above an animal; for all is vanity. All go

- to one place; all are of the dust. Who knows the spirit of men whether it goes upward; and the spirit of the animal whether it goes downward to the earth?" *Ecclesiastes* 3:19-21
7. "It is forbidden, according to the law of the Torah, to inflict pain upon any living creature. On the contrary, it is our duty to relieve the pain of any creature, even if it is ownerless or belongs to a non-Jew." Joseph Karo, *Code of Jewish Law*
 8. "When horses, drawing a cart, come to a rough road or a steep hill, and it is hard for them to draw the cart without help, it is our duty to help them, even when they belong to a non-Jew, because of the precept not to be cruel to animals, lest the owner smite them to force them to draw more than their strength permits." Joseph Karo, *Code of Jewish Law*
 9. "It is forbidden to tie the legs of a beast or of a bird in a manner that causes them pain." Joseph Karo, *Code of Jewish Law*
 10. "While our teacher Moses was tending the flock of Jethro in the wilderness a kid ran away from him. He ran after the kid until it reached Hasuah. Upon reaching Hasuah, the kid came upon a body of water and began to drink. When Moses reached him he said, 'I did not know that you were running because [you were] thirsty. You must be tired.' He placed the kid on his shoulder and began to walk. The Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'You are compassionate in leading flocks belonging to mortals; I swear you will similarly shepherd my flock, Israel.'" Midrash *Exodus Rabbah* 2:2
 11. "As God is merciful, so you also be merciful. As he loves and cares for all His creatures and His children and are related to Him, because He is their Father, so you also love all His creatures as your brethren. Let their joys be your joys, and their sorrows yours. Love them and with every power which God gives you, work for their welfare and benefit, because they are the children of your God,

because they are your brothers and sisters.” Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb*, Chapter 72, Section 482.

12. “Here you are faced with God’s teaching, which obliges you not only to refrain from inflicting unnecessary pain on any animal, but to help and, when you can, to lessen the pain whenever you see an animal suffering, even through no fault of yours.” Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb*, Chapter 60, Section 416.
13. “There are probably no creatures that require more the protective Divine word against the presumption of man than the animals, which like man have sensations and instincts, but whose body and powers are nevertheless subservient to man. In relation to them, man so easily forgets that injured animal muscle twitches just like human muscle, that the maltreated nerves of an animal sicken like human nerves, that the animal being is just as sensitive to cuts, blows, and beating as man. Thus man becomes the torturer of the animal soul.” Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb*, Chapter 60, Section 415
14. “Therefore, compassion for all creatures, including animals, is not only God’s business; it is a virtue that we too must emulate. Moreover, compassion must not be viewed as an isolated phenomenon, one of a number of religious duties in the Judaic conception of the Divine service. It is central to our entire approach to life.” Rabbi David Sears in *The Vision of Eden: Animal Welfare and Vegetarianism in Jewish Law and Mysticism*

B. Biblical Teachings

1. “You shall not muzzle the ox when he threshes out the corn.” Deuteronomy 25:4
2. “You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together.” Deuteronomy 22:10

3. Animals, as well as people, must be allowed to rest on the Sabbath day. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord, your God; in it you shall not do any manner of work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your man-servant, nor your maid-servant, nor your cattle, nor the stranger that is within your gates.” Exodus 20:8–10
4. Based on the question of the angel of God to Bilaam, “Why have you hit your donkey these three times?” (Numbers 22:32), the Talmud states that animals are to be treated humanely. [*tša’ar ba’alei chaim*]
5. Based on Deuteronomy 11:15, “And I will give grass in the fields for your cattle and you shall eat and be satisfied,” the Talmud teaches that a Jew should not eat before first feeding his or her animals.
6. Animals should not be allowed to suffer discomfort from a heavy burden. “If you see the ass of him who hates you fallen due to its burden, you shall surely not pass him by; you shall surely unload it with him.” Exodus 23:5
7. We must be vigilant concerning the well-being of a lost animal. “You shall not see your brother’s ox or his sheep driven away and hide yourself from them; you shall surely bring them back unto your brother.” Deuteronomy 22:1
8. “If you happen to come upon a bird’s nest along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young.” Deuteronomy 27:6

C. Messianic Times

1. “And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the falling together;
And a little child shall lead them

And the cow and the bear shall feed;
Their young ones shall lie down together,
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . .
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain. . . .”
Isaiah 11:6-9

2. “The progress of dynamic ideals will not be eternally blocked. Through general, moral and intellectual advancement . . . shall the latent aspiration of justice for the animal kingdom come out into the open, when the time is ripe.”
Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook, *A Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace*

D. Covenants With Animals

1. “As for me,” says the Lord, “behold I establish My Covenant with you and with your seed after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the fowl, the cattle, and every animal of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every animal of the earth.” Genesis 9:9-10
2. “And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the animals of the field and with the fowls of heaven and with the creeping things of the ground. And I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land and I will make them to lie down safely.” Hosea 2:20

E. Prophets’ Views on Sacrifices

1. “For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them on the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying, “Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.” Jeremiah 7:22 -23
2. “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” Hosea 6:6

3. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me?" says the Lord. «I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs or of he-goats . . . bring no more vain oblations . . . Your new moon and your appointed feasts my soul hates . . . and when you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood." Isaiah 1:11-16
4. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer me burnt offerings and your meal offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take away from me the noise of your song; and let Me not hear the melody of your psalteries. But let justice well up as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Amos 5:21-24
5. "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow before God on high?
Shall I come before God with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what the Lord requires of you
Only to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:6-8
6. Reinforcing the above material are the words of Jerusalem-based Orthodox rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo in his book *Jewish Law as Rebellion: A Plea for Religious Authenticity and Halachic Courage*:

Does Judaism really need animal sacrifices? Would it not be better off without them? After all, the sacrificial

cult compromises Judaism. What does a highly ethical religion have to do with the collection of blood in vessels and the burning of animal limbs on an altar?

No doubt Judaism should be sacrifice-free. Yet it is not. . . . How much more beautiful the Torah would be without sacrifices.

If Judaism had the chance, it would have dropped the entire institution of sacrifices in a second. Better yet, it would have had no part in it to begin with. How much more beautiful the Torah would be without sacrifices! How wonderful it would be if a good part of *Sefer Vayikra* [the portion of the Torah that refers initially to sacrifices] were removed from the biblical text, or had never been there in the first place.

F. God's Original Dietary Law

1. And God said: "Behold, I have given you every herb-yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree that has seed-yielding fruit—to you it shall be for food." Genesis 1:29
2. "God did not permit Adam and his wife to kill a creature to eat its flesh. Only every green herb shall they all eat together." Rashi's commentary on Genesis 1:29
3. "You are permitted to use the animals and employ them for work, have dominion over them in order to utilize their services for your subsistence, but must not hold their life cheap nor slaughter them for food. Your natural diet is vegetarian." Moses Cassuto in his commentary *From Adam to Noah*
4. "Adam was not permitted meat for purposes of eating." *Sanhedrin* 59b
5. "The high moral level in the vegetarianism of the generations before Noah is a virtue of such value that it cannot be lost forever. In the future ideal state, just as in

the initial period, people and animals will not eat flesh. No one shall hurt nor destroy another living creature. People's lives will not be supported at the expense of the lives of animals." Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook, in *A Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace*

G. Attitudes Toward Vegetarianism and Veganism

1. "The removal of blood which kashrut teaches is one of the most powerful means of making us constantly aware of the concession and compromise which the whole act of eating meat, in reality, is. Again, it teaches us reverence for life." Samuel Dresner, *The Jewish Dietary Laws*, 29
2. "Apparently the Torah was in principle opposed to the eating of meat. When Noah and his descendants were permitted to eat meat this was a concession conditional on the prohibition of the blood. This prohibition implied respect for the principle of life («for the blood is the life») and an allusion to the fact that in reality all meat should have been prohibited. This partial prohibition was designed to call to mind the previously total one." Rabbi Moses Cassutto, quoted by Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Genesis*, p. 77
3. "The Torah teaches a lesson in moral conduct, that man shall not eat meat unless he has a special craving for it . . . and shall eat it only occasionally and sparingly." *Chulin* 84a
4. "Only a scholar of Torah may eat meat, but one who is ignorant of Torah is forbidden to eat meat." *Sanhedrin* 49b
5. "What was the necessity for the entire procedure of ritual slaughter? For the sake of self-discipline. It is far more appropriate for man not to eat meat; only if he has a strong desire for meat does the Torah permit it, and even this only after the trouble and inconvenience necessary to satisfy his desire. Perhaps because of the bother and annoyance of the whole procedure, he will be restrained from such a

strong and uncontrollable desire for meat.” Rabbi Solomon Efraim Lunchitz, *Kli Yakar*

6. “Accordingly, the laws of kashrut come to teach us that a Jew’s first preference should be a vegetarian meal. If, however, one cannot control a craving for meat, it should be kosher meat, which would serve as a reminder that the animal being eaten is a creature of God, that the death of such a creature cannot be taken lightly, that hunting for sport is forbidden, that we cannot treat any living thing callously, and that we are responsible for what happens to other beings (human or animal) even if we did not personally come into contact with them.” Rabbi Pinchas Peli, *Torah Today*, Washington, D.C.: B’Nai B’rith Books, 1987, p. 118.

H. The Current Treatment of Animals

1. “How far have we the right to take our domination of the animal world? Have we the right to rob them of all pleasure in life simply to make more money more quickly out of their carcasses? Have we the right to treat living creatures solely as food converting machines? At what point do we acknowledge cruelty? Farm animals have always been exploited by man in that he rears them specifically for food. But until recently they were individuals, allowed their birthright of green fields, sunlight, and fresh air; they were allowed to forage, to exercise, to watch the world go by, in fact to live. Even at its worst . . . the animal had some enjoyment in life before it died. Today the exploitation has been taken to a degree that involves not only the elimination of all enjoyment, the frustration of all natural instincts, but replacement with acute discomfort, boredom, and the actual denial of health. It has been taken to a degree where the animal is not allowed to live

before it dies.” Ruth Harrison *Animal Machines*, London, Vincent Street, 1964, p. 3.

2. “Every year millions of animals are born and bred for the sole purpose of satisfying those who like the taste of meat. Their lives vary in length from a few weeks to a few years; most live a fraction of the time they would in more natural conditions. They die in slaughterhouses where, if the tranquilizers have their effect, they know only a few moments of the awful fear of death before they are stunned and their throats cut. This is what all meat-eaters actively support, for there would be no batteries, no sweatboxes, no need to castrate male animals or artificially inseminate females, no cattle markets and no slaughterhouses if there was no one insensitive enough to buy their products.”

John Harris, “Killing for Food,” in *Animals, Men, and Morals*, S. R. Godolovith and John Harris, editors. New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1972, 98.

3. “Aren’t humans amazing? They kill wildlife—birds, deer, all kinds of cats, coyotes, beavers, groundhogs, mice and foxes by the million in order to protect their domestic animals and their feed.

Then they kill domestic animals by the billion and eat them.

This in turn kills people by the million, because eating all those animals leads to degenerative—and fatal—health conditions like heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and cancer. So then humans spend billions of dollars torturing and killing millions more animals to look for cures for these diseases.

Elsewhere, millions of other human beings are being killed by hunger and malnutrition because food they could eat is being used to fatten domestic animals.

Meanwhile, few people recognize the absurdity of humans, who kill so easily and violently, and once a year send out cards praying for ‘Peace on Earth.’” C. David

Coats, in the preface of his book, *Old McDonald's Factory Farm*.

4. "It seems doubtful from all that has been said whether the Torah would sanction factory farming, which treats animals as machines, with apparent insensitivity to their natural needs and instincts. This is a matter for decision by halachic authorities." Rabbi Aryeh Carmell, a twentieth-century Torah scholar who lived in Jerusalem, in his book *Masterplan: Judaism, Its Program, Meanings, Goals*.
5. "The current treatment of animals in the livestock trade, definitely renders the consumption of meat as halachically unacceptable as the product of illegitimate means." Rabbi David Rosen, "Vegetarianism: An Orthodox Jewish Perspective," in *Rabbis and Vegetarianism: An Evolving Tradition*, Roberta Kalechofsky, ed. (Marblehead, MA: Micah Publications, 1995), p. 53–60. Rabbi Rosen has told me that if he wrote these words today, he would use the word veganism, rather than vegetarianism.
6. "Indeed a central precept regarding the relationship between humans and animals in *halacha* [Jewish law] is the prohibition against causing cruelty to animals, *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* . . . Practices in the livestock trade today constitute a flagrant violation of this prohibition. I refer not only to the most obvious and outrageous of these, such as the production of veal and goose liver, but also to common practices in the livestock trade, such as hormonal treatment and massive drug dosing." Ibid.
7. "Today not only are we able to enjoy a healthy balanced vegetarian diet as perhaps never before, and not only are therein fact the above-mentioned compelling halachic reasons for not eating meat, but above all, if we strive for that which Judaism aspires to—namely the ennoblement of the spirit—then a vegetarian diet becomes a moral imperative . . . [an] authentic Jewish ethical dietary way of life for our time and for all times." Ibid.

8. “Since when is the actual *shechita* [ritual slaughter] more important than the laws of *tza’ar ba’alei chayim* . . . Are not [mistreated farmed animals] as *treif* (non-kosher) as any other animal that is not slaughtered according to *Halacha* (Jewish law)? Can we hide behind the laws of *shechita* and look the other way when the laws of *tza’ar ba’alei chayim* are violated?

In all honesty: How many of our *glatt* [strictly] kosher kitchens, including my own, are still truthfully kosher?” Nathan Lopes Cardozo, *Jewish Law as Rebellion: A Plea For Religious Authenticity and Halachic Courage*, (Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2018), p. 405.

Appendix E.

Links To Valuable Background Material

The complete text of my book, *Vegan Revolution: Saving Our World, Revitalizing Judaism* can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3ORqCj5>.

A strong vegan statement, including a video that was prepared by Jewish Veg and signed by 175 rabbis can be read here: <https://www.jewishveg.org/rabbinic-statement>. Rabbis who would like to add their signatures can do so here: <https://bit.ly/3cVbjZo>.

Questions and answers about (1) Judaism and vegetarianism and veganism, (2) Judaism and animals, and (3) animal sacrifices and the messianic period can be read at JewishVeg.org/schwartz.

Much valuable material is at the Jewish Veg website (JewishVeg.org).

Over 250 related articles written by me can be read at JewishVeg.org/schwartz. Among the articles are ones relating Judaism to every Jewish holiday and Shabbat and four articles on restoring and transforming the ancient Jewish New Year for Animals.

My book *Judaism and Vegetarianism* can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3Bv4J6g>.

My book *Judaism and Global Survival* can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3By4bwp>.

Many Jewish quotations about animals and related issues can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3bsZCc4>. These quotations are also in Appendix D of this book.

My cover story in the August 9 Jerusalem Report, “Why Jews should be vegans” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3oLy2tH>.

My co-authored (with Prof. Dan Brook) cover story in the Jerusalem Report, “Climate change: an existential threat to humanity and how we can survive,” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3Q6JA6m>.

A *Haggadah* for a *Rosh Chodesh LaBeheimot* event produced by the Jewish Veg Society of Israel (in Hebrew), written by Inbal Cohen, can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3d0NyPy>.

An extremely comprehensive article on the seriousness of climate threats and how many people are dying due to severe climate events can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3PS31QK>.

Sailesh Rao’s 2019 article, “Animal Agriculture Is the Leading Cause of Climate Change,” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3zWVj22>. Rao argues that animal-based agriculture is responsible for at least 87% of annual greenhouse gasses because of methane—a very potent greenhouse gas, about 80 times that of CO₂ per unit weight, in heating up the atmosphere—emitted from cows and other farmed animals. We are missing the opportunity to reforest and rewild over a third of the world’s ice-free land; land that is currently being used for grazing and growing feed crops for animals, which could instead sequester much atmospheric CO₂ and bring its levels down to safer concentrations.

This analysis is reinforced and expanded in Glen Merzer’s recent book, *Food is Climate*. My review of that book can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3PQ2D5a>.

My article, “A Dialogue Between a Jewish Vegan and a Rabbi,” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3d2XmsI>. The article can be used as background for discussion with rabbis and other influential Jews.

My article, “Eighteen Reasons Jews Think They Should Not Be Vegetarians or Vegans (and Why They Are Wrong)” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3Qgw3cJ>.

Lewis Regenstein’s comprehensive article, “Commandments of Compassion: Jewish Teachings on Protecting Animals and Nature” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3OROVh5>.

Prof. Dan Brook’s comprehensive article in *Visible* magazine on the many health benefits of vegan diets, “Health is Wealth,” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3vsxBIs>.

A Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace, a compilation of the vegetarian writings of Rav Kook, edited by Rabbi David Cohen, the *Nazir* of Jerusalem, and translated by Rabbi Jonathan Rubenstein can be read here: <https://bit.ly/2T3Y4e6>.

The complete text of *Perek Shira* (Chapter of Song), with many explanations, can be read in both Hebrew and English here: <https://bit.ly/3OUzrZs>. It contains 85 sections, in each of which various animals and elements of nature, such as forests and oceans, use biblical and rabbinic verses in order to sing God’s praises.

Below are links to my four articles about efforts to renew and transform the ancient Jewish New Year for Animals:

- Animal rights and Jewish law: restoring and transforming an ancient holiday: <https://bit.ly/3zp06YT>
- An Audacious Initiative to Restore the Ancient New Year for Animals: <https://bit.ly/3SdJ7Br>

- Top Ten Reasons for Restoring and Transforming the Ancient New Year for Animals: <https://bit.ly/3Q9KDSZ>
- An Overlooked Mitzvah: *Tsa'ar Ba'alei Chaim*: <https://bit.ly/3OU1Wqp>

A statement, signed by 27 Orthodox rabbis, warning of the moral and spiritual dangers of eating meat can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3PUiLCE>.

My article, “A Vegan View of the Biblical Animal Sacrifices,” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3PTIJGq>.

Material from New Year for Animals pioneer Aharon Varady about the initiative

The resource page for *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* prayers and ritual activities at the Open Siddur Project can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3oOdNS>.

For the Wikipedia article on *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot*, visit here: <https://bit.ly/3zIZVb5>.

A source sheet for teaching about *Rosh Hashanah LaBehimot* can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3oIbUR3>.

Prayer and ritual resources, including the *Kavvanah* for Shofar Blowing, on *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3Q8iufh>.

A really great essay by Melissa Hoffman, director of the Jewish Initiative for Animals, about repairing our relationships with animals in the Times of Israel can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3oImDec>.

His discussions of *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3Bz4l8e>.

A discussion of a *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* activity he was involved in is here: <https://bit.ly/3cYeQGh>.

Material from Rabbi David Seidenberg, founder and director of Neochasid

1. “Animal Rights in the Jewish Tradition” from the 2005 *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3OKu6nC>.
2. His article relating *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* to climate change, “A New Year for the Animals, or a Requiem? The IPCC in Elul,” can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3PS5eM2>.
3. “Kaddish for a Human Minyan” is an English prayer modeled on the kaddish that talks about humanity’s responsibility to Creation and Creator and our connection with all living beings. An effective way to end a *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* seder. PDF is found here: <https://bit.ly/3PVFG0G>, and an explanation here: <https://bit.ly/3bk5BjB>. This could be recited at the end of a *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* event.

Appendix F.

Material About Jewish Veg and Animal Rights Organizations (in alphabetical order)

More information about each of the organizations discussed below can be found at their websites.

Animals Now, formerly Anonymous for Animal Rights, is Israel's leading animal rights group. They initially chose the name "Anonymous" out of "deep solidarity with the suffering of those sentient beings . . . who are subjected to systematic abuse, . . . imprisoned in laboratories, circuses, municipal pounds—but above all: in factory farms." They often hold demonstrations aimed at improving conditions for animals. (Animals-Now.org)

Aytzim: Ecological Judaism works to educate and organize Jews for local, national, and international environmental and climate action. Founded in 2001, Aytzim is among the longest-running Jewish environmental nonprofits in North America. Today, it is the parent organization of five projects: EcoJews, the Green Zionist Alliance, Jewcology.org, Jews of the Earth, and *Shomrei Breishit*: Rabbis and Cantors for the Earth, a project that Aytzim runs in partnership with GreenFaith. Through its projects, Aytzim has written and passed laws in Israel that have led to millions of trees being planted, hundreds of miles of bike trails being built, and the declaration of nature reserves that have saved endangered species from extinction. Aytzim's

two websites—aytzim.org and jewcology.org—together host the largest collection of Jewish-environmental materials available online, including many of my articles.

Concern for Helping Animals in Israel (CHAI) works on behalf of Israel's animals through education, legislation, and rescue. Its sister group Hakol Chai is active in Israel. Since 1984, CHAI has worked to improve conditions for and treatment of animals in Israel. Their efforts have resulted in important legislation, education, campaigns, and direct support—efforts that have saved lives and raised consciousness about animals. (CHAI-online.org)

Hazon: The Jewish Lab for Sustainability envisions vibrant sustainable Jewish communities, enriched by Jewish wisdom, authentic nature connection, and environmental responsibility, and works with their partners to create a better world for all. Founded in 2000, Hazon has grown steadily to become the largest Jewish Outdoor, Food, Farming, and Environmental Education (JOFFEE) organization. They are building a movement that strengthens Jewish life and contributes to a more environmentally sustainable world for all. Their annual Israel Ride, the premier bicycling experience in Israel, benefits the Arava Institute and Hazon. (hazon.org)

International Jewish Vegetarian Society, also known as the **Jewish Ecological and Vegetarian Society** and **Jewish Vegetarian Society-UK**, has, since 1965, been a center for Jewish vegetarianism and vegan activism. Their objectives are to spread awareness of the benefits of rejecting cruelty to animals and extending this to an improved society where humanity is not cruel to fellow beings. Centered in London, the organization distributed their quarterly publication *The Jewish Vegetarian* for many years, which included a wide variety of vegetarian-related material. (JVS.org.uk)

Israeli Jewish Vegetarian Society (Ginger), centered in Jerusalem, helps educate Israelis about Jewish teachings on vegetarianism, veganism, and animal rights, and has brought Israeli vegetarians and vegans together for many years through monthly lectures, cooking demonstrations, pot-luck meals, and other vegetarian-related events, as well as annual *Tu Bishvat* and Passover Seders. (ginger.org.il)

Jewish Veg, formerly **Jewish Vegetarians of North America (JVNA)** is a US-based nonprofit whose mission is to inspire and help Jews to transition to vegan lifestyles. The organization runs several programs, including Plant Pathways, which offers practical and communal support for people transitioning to veganism; a Speakers Bureau, which educates Jews about the benefits of an animal-free diet; a Rabbinic Statement, in which rabbis urge their fellow Jews to eat plants; and holiday events, which create a feeling of community for vegan and vegetarian Jews. They assert that Jewish mandates to preserve human health, treat animals with compassion, protect the environment, conserve natural resources, help hungry people, and pursue peace point to vegetarianism (and preferably veganism) as the ideal diet for Jews. In 2007, the group produced the acclaimed documentary *A Sacred Duty: Applying Jewish Values to Help Heal the World*. (JewishVeg.org)

Shamayim: Jewish Animal Advocacy is a Center for Jewish Spirituality and Leadership. Its core mission is to educate about the benefits of kosher veganism, to empower others to show leadership on animal welfare issues, and to build Jewish spiritual community around these issues. (shamayim.us)

Appendix G.

Jewish Stories About Compassion For Animals

1. Rabbi Israel Salanter, one of the most distinguished Orthodox rabbis of the nineteenth century, failed to appear one Yom Kippur eve to chant the sacred Kol Nidre prayer. His congregation became concerned, for it was inconceivable that their saintly rabbi would be late or absent on this very holy day. They sent out a search party to look for him. After much time, their rabbi was found in the barn of a Christian neighbor. On his way to the synagogue, Rabbi Salanter had come upon one of his neighbor's calves, lost and tangled in the brush. Seeing that the animal was in distress, he freed him and led him home through many fields and over many hills. His act of mercy represented the rabbi's prayers on that Yom Kippur evening. W. Y. Agnon, *Days of Awe*, Jerusalem: Shochon, 1939.

2. Rabbi Zusya of Hanipol, a Chassidic master, once was on a journey to collect money to ransom prisoners. He came to an inn and in one room found a large cage with many types of birds. He saw that the birds wanted to fly out of the cage and be free again. He burned with pity for them and said to himself, "Here you are, Zusya, walking your feet off to ransom prisoners. But what greater ransoming of prisoners can there be than to free these birds from their prison?" He then opened the cage, and the birds flew out into freedom.

When the innkeeper saw the empty cage, he was very angry and asked the people in the house who had released the birds. They answered that there was a man loitering around who appeared to be a fool and that he must have done it. The innkeeper shouted at Zusya: "You fool! How could you rob

me of my birds and make worthless the good money I paid for them?" Zusya replied: "Have you read these words in the Psalms: 'God's tender mercies are over all His works?'" Then the innkeeper beat Zusya and threw him out of the house. And Zusya went his way serenely. Martin Buber, *Tales of the Chasidim*, Volume 1, 249.

3. As the following dialogue indicates, the African King Kazia was astounded when he observed the cruel and unjust way in which Alexander of Macedonia judged disputes, and wondered why Macedonia was still blessed with God's beneficence:

King: Does the rain fall in your country?

Alexander: Yes.

King: Does the sun shine in your country?

Alexander: Yes.

King: Perhaps there are small cattle in your country?

Alexander: Yes.

King: Cursed be the man [who would render such evil judgments], it is only because of the merit of the small cattle that the sun shines upon you and the rain falls upon you. For the sake of the small cattle you are saved!

The midrash concluded: "Hence it is written, 'People and animals You preserved, Oh Lord' (Psalms 36:7), as if to say, 'You preserve people, Oh Lord, because of the merit of the animals' "This suggests that God provides rain and sun, the essentials of a healthy environment, even when people are evil and do not deserve it, because of God's concern for animals." E.J. Schochet, *Animal Life in Jewish Tradition*, New York: Ktav, 1984, p. 147.

4. Rabbi Judah the Prince was sitting and studying the Torah in front of the Babylonian Synagogue in Sepphoris. A calf being taken to the slaughterhouse came to him as if pleading, "Save me!" Rabbi Judah said to it, "What can I do for you? For this you were created." As a punishment for his insensitivity, he suffered from a toothache for thirteen years.

One day, a creeping thing [a weasel] ran past Rabbi Judah's daughter who was about to kill him. He said to her, "My daughter, let it be, for it is written, 'and God's tender mercies are over all his works' (Psalms 145:9)." Because Rabbi Judah prevented an act of unkindness to an animal, his toothache was removed. *Baba Metzia* 25a; *Genesis Rabbah* 33:3

5. While our teacher Moses was tending the flock of Jethro in the wilderness, a kid ran away from him. He ran after the kid until it reached Hasuah. Upon reaching Hasuah, the kid came upon a body of water and began to drink. When Moses reached him, he said, "I did not know that you were running because [you were] thirsty. You must be tired." He placed the kid on his shoulder and began to walk. The Holy One, blessed be He, said, "You are compassionate in leading flocks belonging to mortals; I swear you will similarly shepherd my flock, Israel." *Exodus Rabbah* 2:2

Many Biblical leaders of Israel were trained for their tasks by being shepherds of flocks. As the midrash quoted above indicates, God tested Moses through his shepherding. The greatest Jewish teacher, leader, and prophet was deemed worthy, not because of his abilities as a speaker, statesman, politician, or warrior, but because of his compassion for animals!

God deemed David worthy of leading the Jewish people because he, like Moses, tended his sheep with devotion, bestowing upon them the care each one needed. David used to prevent the larger sheep from going out before the smaller ones. The smaller ones were then able to graze upon the tender grass. Next he permitted the old sheep to feed on the ordinary grass, and finally the young, mature sheep consumed the tougher grass. *Exodus Rabbah* 2:2

6. Rebecca was judged suitable to be Isaac's wife because of the kindness she showed to animals. Eliezer, the Patriarch Abraham's servant, asked Rebecca for water for himself. She

not only gave him water, but also eagerly provided water for his ten thirsty camels. Rebecca's concern for camels was evidence of a tender heart and compassion for all God's creatures. It convinced Eliezer that Rebecca would make a suitable wife for Isaac. (*Genesis* 24:11-20).

7. The patriarch Jacob also demonstrated concern for animals. After their reconciliation, his brother Esau said to him, "Let us take our journey and let us go, and I will go before you." But Jacob, concerned about his children and flocks, replied: "My lord knows that the children are tender, and that the flocks and the herds giving suck are a care to me; and if my workers overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord, I pray you, pass over before his servant and I will journey on gently, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come unto my lord, unto Seir." (*Genesis* 33:12-14).

8. Consistent with the fact that concern for the well-being of animals is the test for a righteous individual, Jacob instructed his son Joseph to determine "whether it is well with your brethren and well with the flock" (*Genesis* 37:14). In the wilderness, the Israelites sought water for both themselves and their cattle. (*Numbers* 20:4).

9. The Torah states "Jacob journeyed to Sukkot and built himself a house, and for his livestock he made shelters; he therefore named the place 'Sukkot' (booths)" (*Genesis* 33:17). The Ohr HaChayim, in his comment on the above verse, suggested the name Sukkot commemorated the shelters that Jacob built for his animals, for this may have been the first time that anyone had taken the trouble to spare animals from the distress of sun and cold.

10. Noah was called a *tzaddik* (righteous person) because of his extraordinary care of the animals on the ark. He was careful to feed each of the animals appropriate food at the proper time. Indeed, the Midrash tells us that Noah did not sleep due to his continuous concern for the welfare of the animals. The Torah explicitly designates only one other personality, Joseph, as a *tzaddik*. In times of crisis, they both provided food for both humans and animals.

11. Rabbi Abramtzi was a man full of compassion—his compassion was for all living things. He would not walk on the grass of the field lest he trample it down. He was very careful not to tread on grasshoppers or crawling insects. If a dog came to the door of his house, he would instruct the members of his household to feed the animal. In winter he would scatter crumbs of bread and seed on the window sills. When sparrows and other birds arrived and began to pick at the food, he could not remove his gaze from them and his face would light up with joy like that of a little child. He looked after his horses far better than his coachmen did. When traveling and the coach had to ascend an incline, he would climb down in order to lighten the load and, more often than not, he would push the cart from behind.

On summer days, he would compel his coachman to stop on the way and turn aside to a field in order that the horses should rest and partake of the grass. The rabbi loved these rest periods in the forest. While the horses were grazing, he would sit under a tree and read a book. At times he would pray in the field or the forest. This gave him great pleasure, for he used to say, “The field and the forest are the most beautiful and finest of the Houses of the Lord.”

It happened once that the rabbi was on the road on a Friday. It would take another three hours to reach home. Due to the rain, the road was very muddy. The wagon could only proceed with difficulty. The mud gripped the wheels and

slowed down its progress. It was midday and they had not even completed half the journey. The horses were tired and worn out. They had no energy to proceed further.

The rabbi told the driver to stop and give fodder to the horses, so that they could regain their strength. This was done. Afterwards the journey was continued, but the going was heavy and the wagon sunk up to the hubs of the wheels in the mud. It was with the greatest difficulty that the horses maintained their balance on the swampy ground. The vapor of sweat enveloped their skin. Their knees trembled and at any moment they would have to rest.

The coachman scolded and urged them on. He then raised his whip on the unfortunate creatures. The rabbi grabbed him by the elbow and cried out: "This is cruelty to animals, cruelty to animals." The coachman answered in fury: "What do you want me to do? Do you want us to celebrate the Sabbath here?"

"What of it?" replied the rabbi. "It is better that we celebrate the Sabbath here than cause the death of these animals by suffering. Are they not the creatures of the Lord? See how exhausted they are. They have not the energy to take one more step forward."

"But what of the Sabbath? How can Jews observe the Sabbath in the forest?" asked the coachman.

"My friend, it does not matter. The Sabbath Queen will come to us here also, for her glory fills the whole world, and particularly in those places where Jews yearn for her. The Lord shall do what is good in His eyes. He will look after us, supply us with our wants and guard us against all evil."

Mordechai Ben Ammi, quoted in Joe Green's pamphlet, "The Jewish Vegetarian Tradition," pp. 19-20.

Appendix H.

Suggestions For Promoting Improved Conditions For Animals

Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of his own family and does not do so is punished for the transgressions of his family. Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of the people of his community and does not do so is punished for the transgressions of his community. Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of the entire world and does not do so is punished for the transgressions of the entire world. (*Shabbat* 54b)

Judaism teaches that “It . . . is not study that is the chief thing, but action [based on study]” (*Kiddushin* 40b). So, it is important not only to study Judaism’s splendid teachings about compassion for animals and to investigate the many ways these teachings are violated today by abuses of animals on factory farms and in laboratories, circuses, rodeos, and other settings. It is a moral imperative to apply Jewish teachings to eliminate or at least sharply reduce these abuses.

Some steps that can help increase awareness and lead to positive changes include:

1. Ask rabbis, Jewish educators, and other Jewish leaders to give sermons and classes on Jewish teachings on compassion for animals.
2. Ask Jewish school principals and teachers to see that *tsa’ar ba’alei chaim* is emphasized in classes and that vegan meals, or at least vegan options, are provided.

3. Write letters to editors, politicians, educators, and others, stressing the importance of improving conditions for animals. If time permits, some time at *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* events could be devoted to writing such letters, with supplies and model letters provided.
4. Become knowledgeable on the issues and volunteer to speak about them. Learn the facts about animal issues from this and other books (see Bibliography), the Internet (see websites listed in Appendix E), and other sources. Learn how to effectively answer questions about animal issues and use such questions as an opportunity to inform others.
5. Help educate others about Jewish teachings about animals. Wear a button. Put a bumper sticker on your car. Create and display posters. Write timely letters to the editors of your local newspapers. Set up programs and discussions. There are a wide variety of interesting animal rights and vegetarian/vegan slogans on buttons, bumper stickers, and T-shirts and sweatshirts. For example:
 - Love animals. Don't eat them.
 - Veganism is good for life.
 - Happiness is reverence for life. Be vegan.
6. Use the material in this and other vegetarian/vegan books in discussions with doctors. Help increase their knowledge of the many health benefits of vegetarian and vegan diets.
7. Ask your local rabbis if Jews should eliminate or at least sharply reduce their consumption of meat and other animal products because of important Jewish principles such as *bal tashchit*, *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*, and *pikuach nefesh* that are being violated by animal-based diets. Suggest that they include these concepts in sermons and classes.

8. Request that meat and other animal products no longer be served at synagogue and other Jewish organizational functions and celebrations. Ask school principals to provide students with nutritious vegan options.
9. Ask your rabbi and/or head of a Hebrew school to organize a trip to a slaughterhouse so that people can observe for themselves how animals are slaughtered. A trip to a factory farm to see how cattle, chickens, and other animals are raised would also be very instructive.
10. Arrange synagogue and Jewish organizational sessions where vegan dishes are sampled and recipes exchanged.
11. Speak or organize an event with a guest speaker on the advantages of veganism and its many connections to Judaism.
12. Get animal rights, vegetarian, and vegan books into public and synagogue libraries by donating duplicates, requesting that libraries purchase such books, or, if you can afford it, buying some and donating them. Ask local librarians to set up special exhibits about vegan foods and vegan-related issues.
13. Work with others to set up a vegan food co-op or restaurant, or help support such places if they already exist. Encourage people to patronize such establishments.
14. Register yourself with a community, library, or school speakers' bureau. Take advantage of your increased knowledge and awareness to start speaking out.
15. Contact the food editor of your local newspaper and ask that more articles about veganism and vegan recipes be included.
16. When applicable, raise awareness by showing how values of the Sabbath and festivals are consistent

with vegetarian and vegan concepts. For example: point out that the kiddush recited before lunch on the Sabbath indicates that animals, as well as people, are to be allowed to rest on the Sabbath day; on Sukkot, note that the *sukkah* (temporary dwelling place) is decorated with pictures and replicas of fruits and vegetables (never with animal products); on Yom Kippur, consider the mandate expressed in the prophetic reading of Isaiah to “share your bread with the hungry,” which can be carried out best by not having a diet that wastes large amounts of land, grain, water, fuel, and other agricultural resources. At JewishVeg.org/schwartz, there are articles in a special section with articles linking all the Jewish holidays and Shabbat to veganism and vegetarianism.

17. Join the International Jewish Vegetarian Society, Jewish Veg (website addresses provided in Appendix E), and/or local vegan groups.
18. If people are not willing to become vegans, or at least vegetarians, encourage them to at least make a start by, for example, giving up red meat and/or having one or two meatless meals a week (perhaps Mondays and Thursdays, which were traditional Jewish fast days).
19. Do not concentrate only on animal rights and veganism. They are only part of the pursuit of justice, compassion, and peace. Become aware and try to affect public policy with regard to the issues raised in this book: preserving health, showing compassion for animals, saving human lives, conserving resources, helping hungry people, and seeking and pursuing peace.

Jewish Teachings On Involvement and Protest

Judaism urges active involvement in issues facing society. A Jew must not be concerned only about their own personal affairs when the community is in trouble.

If a person of learning participates in public affairs and serves as judge or arbiter, he gives stability to the land. But if he sits in his home and says to himself, “What have the affairs of society to do with me? . . . Why should I trouble myself with the people’s voices of protest? Let my soul dwell in peace!”—if he does this, he overthrows the world. (*Tanchuma to Mishpatim*)

Judaism teaches that people must struggle to create a better society. The Torah frequently admonishes: “And you shall eradicate the evil from your midst” (*Deuteronomy* 13:6, 17:7, 21:21, 24:7). Injustice cannot be passively accepted; it must be actively resisted and, ultimately, eliminated. The Talmudic sages teach that one reason Jerusalem was destroyed was because its citizens failed in their responsibility to constructively criticize one another’s improper behavior (*Shabbat* 99b) They indicate that “Love which does not contain the element of criticism is not really love.” (*Genesis Rabba* 54: 3)

The essential elements of Jewish practice include devotion to Torah, study, prayer, performing good deeds and other *mitzvot* (Commandments), and cultivating a life of piety. But, as indicated in the following *Midrash* (a rabbinic story or teaching based on Biblical events or concepts), in order to be considered pious, a person must protest against injustice. Even God is challenged to apply this standard in judging people:

R. Acha ben R. Chanina said: Never did a favorable decree go forth from the mouth of the Holy One which He

withdrew and changed into an unfavorable judgment, except the following: “And the Lord said to His angel: ‘Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed there’” (*Ezekiel* 9:4). (Thus, they will be protected from the angels who are slaying the wicked.)

At that moment, the indignant prosecutor came forward in the Heavenly Court.

Prosecutor: Lord, wherein are these [marked ones] different from those [the rest]?

God: These are wholly righteous men, while those are wholly wicked.

Prosecutor: But Lord, they had the power to protest, but did not.

God: I knew that had they protested, they would not have been heeded.

Prosecutor: But Lord, if it was revealed to You, was it revealed to them? Accordingly, they should have protested and incurred scorn for thy holy Name, and have been ready to suffer blows . . . as the prophets of Israel suffered.

God revoked his original order, and the righteous were found guilty, because of their failure to protest. (*Shabbat* 55a)

Hence, it is not sufficient merely to do *mitzvot* while acquiescing in unjust conditions. The Maharal of Prague, a sixteenth-century sage, states that individual piety pales in the face of the sin of not protesting against an emerging communal evil, and a person will be held accountable for not preventing wickedness when capable of doing so. One of the most important dangers of silence in the face of evil is that it implies acceptance or possibly even support. According to Rabbeinu Yonah, a medieval sage, sinners may think to themselves, “Since others are neither reproving nor contending against us, our deeds are permissible.” (*Orchid Tzaddilim* 24)

Rabbi Joachim Prinz, a refugee from pre-World War II Nazi Germany and former president of the American Jewish Congress, spoke to the 250,000 people who took part in the “March on Washington” organized by the Reverend Martin Luther King and others in 1963 on behalf of Civil Rights. He stated that under Hitler’s rule, he had learned about the problem of apathy toward fellow human beings: “Bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and most tragic problem is silence.”

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a leading twentieth century philosopher, believed that apathy toward injustice results in greater wickedness. He wrote that “indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself” and that silent acquiescence leads to evil being accepted and becoming the rule.

Jews are required to protest against injustice and to try to agitate for change even when successful implementation appears very difficult. The Talmudic sage Rabbi Zera stated, “Even though people will not accept it, you should rebuke them.” (*Shabbat* 55a) We can never be sure that our words and actions will be ineffective. Thus the only responsible approach is to try our best.

Just as many drops of water can eventually carve a hole in a rock, many small efforts can eventually have a major impact.

There are times when a person must continue to protest in order to avoid being corrupted:

A man stood at the entrance of Sodom crying out against the injustice and evil in that city. Someone passed by and said to him, “For years you have been urging the people to repent, and yet no one has changed. Why do you continue?” He responded: “When I first came, I protested because I hoped to change the people of Sodom. Now I continue to cry out, because if I don’t, they will have changed me.”

In his article “The Rabbinic Ethics of Protest,” Rabbi Reuven Kimelman observed that the means of protest must be consistent with responsibility to the community. He states that protest must involve both love and truth since love implies the willingness to suffer, and truth, the willingness to resist. Together, he concluded, they encompass an approach of nonviolent resistance, toward the ends of justice and peace.

The Talmud teaches that controversy and protest must be “for the sake of Heaven.” The protest of Korach against the rule of Moses in the wilderness (*Numbers* 16:1-35) is considered negatively by the Jewish tradition because it was based on jealousy and personal motives.

Each person should imagine that the world is evenly balanced between good and evil and that his or her actions can determine the destiny of the entire world.

Even if little is accomplished, trying to make improvements will prevent the hardening of your heart and will affirm that you accept moral responsibility. The very act of consciousness-raising is important because it may lead to other positive future changes.

Please keep in mind that it is not only conditions for animals that are at stake (as important as this is), but the future of humanity. If we want to leave a decent, habitable, environmentally-sustainable world for our children and grandchildren, it is important that we get involved. We should not be discouraged by the immensity of the task. As our sages indicated, “It is not [your responsibility] to complete the [entire] task, but you are not free to desist from [doing all you can]” (*Pirkei Avot* 2: 16). As anthropologist Margaret Mead put it, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Appendix I.

Tips for Organizing and Carrying Out a Holiday Seder

1. Preliminaries

It is best to hold a New Year for Animals Seder at a synagogue or a Jewish Community Center. Of course, it can also be held at a home. To reach wider audiences, Zoom can be used.

The Seder can be publicized through flyers, synagogue announcements, email messages, Twitter, Facebook, and through personal conversations.

If held at a synagogue or JCC, members might be asked if they would like to be co-sponsors in honor or in memory of someone by contributing for food and other costs. The names of sponsors could be announced at the Seder and/or on a sheet that is distributed at the event.

2. Getting Maximum Participation

Since this book is being made freely available as widely as possible as an eBook, Seder participants can be asked to review it prior to the Seder and to bring questions and comments for the Seder and to consider delivering a short *dvar Torah* (Torah teaching) at the event.

Unless there is a very large number of participants, each attendee could be asked to briefly introduce themselves and talk about why they are attending.

3. Food

Since we are transforming an ancient holiday that did not directly involve eating, there is no tradition about the type of foods that should be served. And there is really no need for any food to be served, except possibly for the grape juice or wine. However, since the renewed holiday is focused on compassion to animals, no meat or other animal products should be served. It is suggested that, in the tradition of another renewed holiday, *Tu Bishvat*, the Seder include foods from the seven species from Israel that are mentioned in the Torah (Deuteronomy 8:7-10): wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and date honey.

The Hebrew Haggadah mentioned earlier suggests putting symbolic foods on a “Seder plate”:

On the Seder plate, we chose to place products from plants, which simulate products that mostly originate in the animal food industries. These products can remind us of the exploitation of animals in the hands of humans. The meat substitutes can remind us of the birds and the cattle and sheep that are imprisoned and slaughtered for their meat. The vegetable mayonnaise can remind us of the chickens in egg industry coops. The vegan cheese can remind us of dairy cows.

At the same time, the products on the Seder plate represent for us the possibility of living with the animals and not at their expense, the possibility of feeding only on plants.

Will the future come with such products as the only evidence that, from time immemorial, humans imprisoned animals under cruel conditions to produce from them meat, eggs, and milk?

4. Blessings at the Seder

Before drinking the first cup of wine or grape juice the following blessings should be recited:

*Baruch atah Adonoi, Eloheinu Melech ha'olom, bo'rei p'ree
ha'gofen.*

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, King of the Universe,
Creator of the fruit of the vine.

This blessing should be recited only before drinking the first cup and NOT before drinking the later cups.

Another blessing is below. It is appropriate here because it is recited by Jews at special occasions.

*Baruch ataw Adonoi, Eloheinu Melech ha'olom,
Sheh'hech'heeyanu, v'ki'amornu, v'heegeeyarnu lazman
hazeh.*

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, King of the Universe,
Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us
to this season.

This should also be recited only before drinking the first cup of wine or grape juice.

Appendix J.

Should Humanity Go Veg?: Top 12 Reasons to Eat Plants

[This article was contributed by my friend, colleague, and sometime co-author Prof. Dan Brook. It initially appeared in *Animal Agriculture is Immoral*, edited by Sailesh Rao (A Climate Healers Publication, 2020).]

There are *many* compelling reasons to go veg and there seem to be more all the time. Vegetarians do not eat any meat from any animals (e.g., cows, pigs, chickens, fish, and others); vegans are a stricter subset of vegetarians who, in addition to avoiding meat, also do not consume any animal products (e.g., no eggs or dairy and no meat, often in addition to no honey, leather, silk, feathers, and wool to minimize animal suffering and exploitation). People who eat these plant-based diets enjoy all sorts of fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts, and seeds.

Here are my top twelve reasons for you to finally get off your good intentions and join me and millions of other people who have changed their lives for the better with a plant-based diet. I encourage you to do further investigation regarding these issues, to learn more and make more informed decisions. You could also find—and join!—your local or national vegetarian/vegan society.

1. Life.

You will eliminate the suffering and *save the lives* of dozens of animals each year. As Alice Walker poignantly declares, “Animals . . . were not made for humans any more than black people were made for whites or women for men.” Every

animal you don't eat is another life saved, and the saving of a single life is the saving of an entire world. The less meat and other animal products that you demand and consume, the less will be produced and supplied. It is literally a matter of life and death; eating animals means you are actively supporting the imprisoning, torturing, and killing of those innocent animals, regardless of intentions or desires. Vegetarians and vegans reduce suffering and save lives *every day*. It's really that simple.

2. Climate.

You will help *fight climate change*, the #1 threat facing life on Earth, because the livestock industry is the #1 cause of our climate crisis, accounting for over half (51%) of greenhouse gas emissions. "The [biggest] single action that a person can take to reduce carbon emissions," says Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, former chair of the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "is vegetarianism." Climate change is threatening the existence of a wide array of animals and plants as well as hundreds of millions of people. Although we should strongly encourage our governments, businesses, schools, workplaces, unions, religious institutions, restaurants, hotels, and other organizations to be more sustainable, we can easily make dramatic differences in our personal lives by reducing our own carbon footprint and methane mouthprint. Indeed, switching from the Standard American Diet (SAD) to a vegetarian or, better still, vegan diet is more effective in reducing greenhouse gases than switching from an SUV to a hybrid car (and nothing stops us from doing both—and *more*), as doing so can at least halve your greenhouse gas emissions. Plant-strong is planet-friendly, so delete meat to reduce the heat. We can effectively fight global climate change with our forks, knives, spoons, and chopsticks!

3. Deforestation.

You will help *stop deforestation*, especially of the rainforests, which have been called the “lungs of the Earth.” “In a nutshell,” reports the Center for International Forestry Research, “cattle ranchers are making mincemeat out of Brazil’s Amazon rainforests.” The #1 reason for the clearing of the Amazon Rainforest, accounting for about 80% of the carnage, is for the grazing of cows for the livestock industry. The #2 reason is to grow (often genetically-engineered) soybeans and corn as feed for cows, pigs, and chickens—not food for people. Similar tragic dynamics are destroying forests throughout Latin America, Africa, and Asia, having already done so in most of North America, Europe, and Australia. The livestock industry is slashing and burning the rainforests in the pursuit of cheap meat and high profits, reducing these amazingly biodiverse, beautiful, and breathing forests into carbon dioxide and cholesterol. They are simultaneously imperiling the global environment, precious habitats, endangered species, local communities, indigenous cultures, people’s health, potential medicines, and aesthetic beauty. Shrimp farms and fish farms are doing similar things with mangroves and other underwater forests. This is a crime against nature, animals, and ourselves, but we can stop this ecocide with the power of plants.

4. Biodiversity.

You will help *preserve biodiversity* by eating a plant-based diet. Biodiversity, the accumulated evolutionary wealth of nature, is evidence of a healthy ecosystem. Biodiversity is also beautiful. The meat industry engages in deforestation, soil erosion, air and water pollution, all of which are negatively affecting flora and fauna, thereby decreasing biodiversity through species endangerment and extinction. When you eat plant-based foods, you save not only the lives of farmed animals, but also the lives

of wild animals whose habitats are destroyed by deforestation, expanded farmland, and agro-industrial practices and pollution (*e.g.*, bears, birds, frogs, butterflies, fish, and more), as well as the systematic targeting of animals who compete for food with or prey upon farmed animals (*e.g.* wolves, coyotes, and bobcats, though many others as well). If you care about nature and love animals, don't eat them. Thrive and let thrive.

5. Health.

You will *greatly improve your health*, and the health of your family, by reducing the unnecessary tragedies of heart disease (the #1 cause of death in the U.S., accounting for as much as 40% of all deaths) and cancer (the #2 cause of death), as well as stroke, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, gout, kidney disease, osteoporosis, even Alzheimer's Disease, and other serious ailments. People who make the switch to plant-based eating often lose weight easily, reduce their cholesterol and inflammation, have more energy, and feel and look better, thereby also reducing the odds of various other health problems. Many people have been able to reverse obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease, by eliminating animal foods from their diets.

While animal foods have excess protein, saturated fat, and unwanted cholesterol, they contain zero fiber and zero antioxidants. In stark contrast, plant foods have vitamins, minerals, fiber, phytonutrients, and antioxidants, while *never* containing any cholesterol. According to Michael Roizen, M.D., people can achieve up to an additional thirteen years of healthy life with a plant-based diet. "People who consume saturated, 4-legged fat have a shorter life span and more disability at the end of their lives," says Dr. Roizen. "Animal products clog your arteries, zap your energy, and slow down your immune system. Meat eaters also experience accelerated cognitive and sexual dysfunction at a younger age."

The best healthcare reform you can make in your personal life is preventive care by eating a plant-based diet. Prevention

of disease is far preferable—and much cheaper, easier, safer, and more pleasurable—than treatment of those often-debilitating and deadly diseases. Be plant strong to protect and increase your strength and health. Health is wealth—enhance and preserve yours with healthier food choices.

6. Public Health.

You will not only increase your own health by eating a plant-based diet, but you will also protect and *promote public health*. The hunt for meat in Africa, for example, has led to the emergence and spread of HIV/AIDS and ebola, what some have called the “revenge of the rainforest.” Between 95 and 99% of meat and other animal products in the U.S. come from frightening factory farms, with its high concentration of animals and overuse of hormones and antibiotics—about 3/4 of all antibiotics in the U.S. are pumped into livestock—leads to deadly antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections, such as MRSA. Indeed, antibiotic-resistant, flesh-eating MRSA now annually kills many more Americans than AIDS!

The production and distribution of meat is associated with E. coli, bird flu, swine flu (which started on a hog farm in North Carolina), mad cow disease, SARS, the so-called Spanish Flu (which started on a chicken farm in Kansas), and the more recent COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps we can take a hint from nature and acknowledge that most contagious diseases originated in animals, while most medicines originated in plants.

Dr. Gauden Galea, the World Health Organization Representative in China, stated that “As long as people eat meat, there is going to be some risk of infection. They aren’t just risking themselves but also risking the life of others who don’t eat meat.” Writing for *Harvard Political Review*, Joseph Winters makes the case that this “pandemic provides an opportunity to more deeply interrogate the structural injustice of this system. It is animal agriculture that is wrong.” You can help protect

community health and help prevent future epidemics and pandemics just by eating veg.

7. Hunger.

You will *reduce world hunger* by eating lower on the food chain. In the words of Chrissie Hynde, “Global hunger could be directly attributed to meat-eating.” While millions of people annually die from over-consumption—particularly the consumption of fat and cholesterol, sugar, and salt—millions of excluded people annually die from under-consumption, from starvation and hunger-related diseases. Although the world produces more than enough food to feed all its people, the inequality of wealth and power, along with the inefficiency of land use, crop production, and food distribution, creates conditions that lead to food scarcity, chronic hunger, malnutrition, starvation, environmental degradation, and ethnic violence. Feeding crops—corn, soy, wheat, oats, alfalfa, potatoes, etc.—to animals raised for meat instead of hungry people is another dimension of the immorality of animal agriculture.

World hunger is neither necessary, automatic, nor inevitable. Plant-based diets create conditions that are more fair and just, as well as more efficient and sustainable, thereby potentially allowing more people to be fed. The current food system inefficiently uses land, grain, water, labor, chemicals, energy, and other vital resources to produce food to be fed to animals that are then killed and fed to those people who can afford it and demand it, thereby skewing the market to the detriment of those who are poor and hungry. Therefore, vegetarianism and veganism can help ease the world hunger problem.

8. Water.

You will help *conserve one of our most precious resources: water*, something we literally cannot live without. Half of the fresh-water in the U.S. is used and wasted by the livestock industry,

which has in turn polluted half of the waterways in the U.S.. It takes thousands of gallons (several thousand liters) of water to produce a single pound of beef—more than a hundred times than what is needed for wheat, for example—and the amount of water used to raise a single cow is literally enough to float a naval destroyer. The water it takes to produce just a couple pounds (1 kg.) of beef is more than what an average person uses to shower for an entire year. In *The Food Revolution*, John Robbins states that “There is no other single action that is as effective at saving water as eating a plant-based diet.” If you eat meat, you are squandering this vital resource—but you don’t have to.

9. Social Justice.

You will *promote social justice* by choosing plants. Eating meat and other animal products contributes to confinement, cruelty, torture, rape, terror, and other forms of violence against animals, who—just like you—want pleasure and to avoid pain while seeking to preserve their lives. Every year, billions of individual animals (millions per day!) are imprisoned, tortured, and killed in a variety of horrible and sickening ways. For example, lambs are shackled and boxed to keep them “tender,” cows and pigs are crammed for “efficiency,” chickens are debeaked to “protect” them, animals are branded, docked, castrated, beaten, and hung upside-down by their limbs—all without anesthesia. Entire schools of fish are netted along with turtles, dolphins, whales, sharks, seals, birds, and others (killing these creatures mercilessly and indiscriminately, not to mention the other “by-catch”). Animals are terrorized and slaughtered as their bodily fluids—blood, pus, saliva, sweat, vomit, tears, mucus, semen, urine, and even feces—being splattered everywhere, some left to suffer and die in piles of other dead and dying animals. Female animals are often impregnated by artificial insemination on “rape racks,” as they are called by the

livestock industry, and repeatedly forced to endure anxiety, pain, and then pregnancy, only for their newborns to be taken from them shortly after birth, further adding to the trauma for these gentle, innocent animals.

The effects on the workers who torture and kill these animals, as with many soldiers and executioners, cannot be underestimated, with many suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, repetitive stress injuries, and accidental amputations. Sociologists have studied the “brutalization effect,” whereby people increasingly feel free to commit violence when it seems legitimated. Further, slaughterhouses are also one of the most dangerous workplaces for humans, disproportionately staffed by people of color and recent immigrants with less knowledge, fewer opportunities, and less power to form a union or complain about their unjust and dangerous conditions. According to Eric Schlosser in *Fast Food Nation*, “at least 1/3 of meat packing workers are injured every year.” Human Rights Watch calls meat packing “the most dangerous factory job in America.”

“We treat animals how we used to treat human slaves. What possible justification could there be for that?” writes Prof. Gary Francione in “One Right For All. “Like racism, sexism, homophobia, antisemitism, and islamophobia, we engage in unfair and unjust speciesism, and indeed a form of fascism, when we treat (and eat) animals as means to our selfish ends, simply because we have the physical force, coercive power, and selfish desire to do so. If we are rightly outraged at the occasional abuse of cats, dogs, and elephants, for example, we should be likewise outraged at the *daily* abuse, torture, suffering, and murder of farm animals for food.”

10. Membership.

You will be in *good company*. Many of the world’s greatest minds have been vegetarian or vegan for at least part of their lives

and advocated it: Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Buddha, Ovid, Plutarch, Leonardo da Vinci, John Milton, Voltaire, Isaac Newton, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Catherine of Siena, Alexander Pope, Mary Wollstonecraft, Benjamin Franklin, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Leo Tolstoy, Clara Barton, Johnny Appleseed, George Bernard Shaw, Susan B. Anthony, Thomas Edison, Mohandas Gandhi, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Nikola Tesla, Rabindranath Tagore, Louisa May Alcott, H.G. Wells, Upton Sinclair, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, Linus Pauling, Franz Kafka, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Rosa Parks, Benjamin Spock, Jane Goodall, Thich Nhat Hanh, J.M. Coetzee, Rainer Maria Rilke, Bob Marley, Elie Wiesel, Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, the Dalai Lama, Carl Sagan, John Rawls, Aung San Su Kyi, Gloria Steinem, Paul McCartney, Greta Thunberg, “Lisa Simpson,” and many, *many* more. While meat is dead, plant-based eating is alive and thriving! Join us. (For what it’s worth, Hitler was *not* a vegetarian, despite Goebbels’ Nazi propaganda based on the occasional avoidance of some meats, but Hippocrates, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and Abraham Lincoln may have been.)

11. Ethics in Action.

You will be “walking the walk” and *living your ideals*, as well as the highest ideals of all major religions, which teach respect for life, compassion for other living beings, protection of the weak, practicing kindness, promotion of justice, and peace in the world—in addition to the many philosophies which support non-violence, the greater good, positive ethics, personal integrity, ecological sustainability, social justice, and so on. As Gregory Dicum states, “Vegetarianism is a simple idea—don’t eat animals—with an ancient pedigree.” Veganism takes this idea further. Live your highest ideals, not just your fears or your tired, old habits. Animal agriculture is immoral; your meals don’t have to be.

12. Feelings.

You will *feel better emotionally and spiritually*, knowing that you are part of the solution, not the problem, and doing what's best for you and your family, for the animals, for your community, and for our environment. All the while feeling good. Eating veg is truly a feel-good diet.

13. More.

In the spirit of generosity, I offer a baker's dozen. Even if you don't need any more reasons to be plant strong, you might still be curious. If that's the case, please read *Vegetarian Times*' "Why Go Veg," where you can also learn about losing weight, saving money, protecting animals, and avoiding chemicals. And consider subscribing to a veg magazine, whether physical or digital, for continued information and support, as well as liking and following veg groups online.

Any *one* of these reasons should be enough for us to seriously question the entire animal production and consumption death spiral. Combined, these delightful dozen reasons can positively change our lives and radically change the world for the better. Let's make it happen together and live the best lives we all desire and deserve!

Dan Brook, PhD, is a writer, poet, photographer, speaker, activist, and instructor of sociology at San Jose State University, where he is Faculty Advisor of the Spartan Veg Club. Dr. Brook is on the Board of the San Francisco Veg Society, the Advisory Board of Jewish Veg, and is the Administrator of Vegetarian & Vegan Chiang Mai (on Facebook), as well as the editor of the non-profit veg cookbook *Justice in the Kitchen: An Or Shalom Community Cookbook*, and the author of the free ebook *Eating the Earth: The Truth About What We Eat* (available in various languages).

A similar version of this essay was originally published in the 2020 book *Animal Agriculture Is Immoral: An Anthology*, edited by Sailesh Rao.

Appendix K.

Sample Questions To Provide To Interviewers for Podcast and Radio Interview Programs and Outline of Suggested Responses

1. Why are you attempting to restore and transform an ancient Jewish holiday?
2. What are your objectives? What do you hope to accomplish?
3. What are some Jewish teachings about the proper treatment of animals?
4. You mentioned that the holiday was originally related to animal sacrifices. Why were animal sacrifices part of the Jewish religion?
5. Why do you believe that the world is heading toward a climate catastrophe, as well as major food, water, and energy scarcities?
6. Why do you think that your proposal to restore and transform the ancient holiday could be a game changer?
7. How are you trying to get your message out?
8. What has been the response of the Jewish community so far?
9. What are the next steps in your efforts to restore and transform the ancient Jewish New Year for Animals?
10. Any final points you would like to make?

Outline of responses:

1. Why are you attempting to restore and transform an ancient Jewish holiday?

Judaism has very strong teachings about compassion for animals, but they are not being applied, and animals are treated horribly on factory farms and in other settings.

To increase chances to avert a climate catastrophe, it is essential that there be a major shift to plant-based diets.

Chapter 2 gives many more reasons. Appendix D has many quotations about Jewish teachings about compassion for animals and how far realities for animals are from these teachings.

2. What are your objectives? What do you hope to accomplish?

I aim to increase awareness of Judaism's powerful teachings about compassion to animals and how far the realities of the treatment of animals differ from these teachings and move the world toward veganism.

3. What are some Jewish teachings about the treatment of animals?

Appendix D has a wealth of Jewish quotations about Jewish teachings on compassion for animals.

These include:

* "God's compassion is over all His works." (Psalms 145:9)

* "The righteous person considers the lives of his or her animals." (Proverbs 12:10)

* Torah: "Don't yoke a strong and a weak animal together" and "do not muzzle the ox while he works in the field."

* Ten Commandments: animals, as well as people, to rest on Shabbat.

* Feed animals before you feed yourself.

* Test for leadership: Moses and King David were both considered fit to be Jewish leaders because of their compassionate treatment of animals when they were shepherds.

4. You mentioned that the holiday was originally related to animal sacrifices. Why were animal sacrifices part of the Jewish religion?

* Maimonides: Concession to the common mode of worship at the time.

* Prophets: not God's primary concern – God seeks compassion, justice. The sacrifices would be an abomination to God, if carried out along with acts of injustice and oppression.

* Rav Kook: Messianic period will involve only non-animal sacrifices.

Questions and answers related to the biblical sacrifices can be read here: https://www.jewishveg.org/schwartz/faq_sacrifices.html.

5. Why do you believe that the world is heading toward a climate catastrophe as well as major food, water, and energy scarcities?

Because it is the consensus among almost all scientists (97%) of major science academies worldwide, and of thousands of peer-reviewed articles in respected science journals.

There has been a very substantial increase in the frequency and severity of heat waves, droughts, wildfires, storms, and floods.

The world has been heating up. Every decade since the 1970s has been hotter than the last. 2020 tied 2016 as the hottest year on record. All 22 years in this century thus far are among the hottest 23 on record.

More information about climate threats can be found in an article in *The Jerusalem Report* written by Dan Brook and me: “Climate change: an existential threat to humanity and how we can survive.” It can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3zOHwuq>.

6. Why do you think that your proposal to restore and transform the ancient holiday could be a game changer?

This book is meant to be a wake-up call. We need to acknowledge the seriousness of the threats and Judaism’s strong teachings being ignored.

Focusing attention on Judaism’s teaching on compassion for animals will hopefully result in many Jews shifting to plant-based diets. This would sharply reduce climate threats, life-threatening diseases caused by animal-based diets, the massive mistreatment of animals, the very inefficient use of land, water, energy and other resources, and the very real threats of future pandemics.

7. How are you trying to get your message out?

Wide variety of contacts.

Email.

Facebook.

Twitter.

Newsletter.

Calls.

Personal contacts.

Articles.

Letters to editors.

8. What has been the response of the Jewish community so far?

I’ve received very positive feedback from the veg community and some rabbis, and a lot of denial from animal-eaters.

9. What are your next steps?
 1. Very diligently promote this eBook about restoring and transforming *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot*.
 2. Send this book to many rabbis and other Jews.
 3. Then follow up.

10. Any final points you would like to make?

Our world is rapidly approaching a climate catastrophe, severe food, water, and energy scarcities, and other environmental disasters. If we want to have any hope to leave a decent, habitable, environmentally sustainable world for future generations, it is essential that there be a societal shift toward vegan diets. Yet many are in denial, “rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic while we head toward a giant iceberg.” It is essential that changes be made, that Jewish values be applied to help shift our imperiled planet onto a sustainable path.

Key points to bring up during an interview

1. The world is rapidly approaching a climate catastrophe
2. The world is also approaching severe food, water, and energy scarcities and other major environmental disasters
3. Trying to avert the impending disasters should be a major focus for civilization today.
4. An essential step in averting the catastrophe is a major societal shift toward vegan diets
5. Like other religions, Judaism has powerful teachings on compassion towards animals and environmental sustainability

6. Unfortunately, there is insufficient emphasis on these teachings, as more emphasis is on learning about the biblical sacrifices, which animals are kosher to be eaten, and how animals are to be slaughtered and prepared to be eaten.
7. There is much apathy and denial about the impending catastrophes and the need to make averting them a societal imperative.
8. Hence, there is a need to awaken people to the dangers and the need for major changes to avert the impending disasters.
9. Bold, audacious steps are necessary to wake people up.
10. I believe that such a step is to respectfully challenge the Jewish community through restoring an ancient, long forgotten Jewish holiday initially related to the sacrificing of animals and transforming it into one that aims to increase awareness of Judaism's powerful teachings on compassion to animals.

Appendix L.

A Sample Press Release To Announce a *Rosh Hashanah* *LaBeheimot* Event or To Announce the Promotion of the Initiative To Restore the Ancient Jewish Holiday

COALITION OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS URGES RESTORATION/TRANSFORMATION OF ANCIENT JEWISH HOLIDAY

For Immediate Release:

Date of the press release

Contact:

Name, email address, and phone number of contact

A coalition of Jewish organizations and leaders is urging that the ancient Jewish holiday of *Rosh Hashanah L'Maaser Beiheima* (New Year's Day for Tithing Animals), occurring on the first day of the month of Elul, a day initially intended for counting domesticated animals intended for sacrificial offerings, [*Mishnah Seder Moed* 1:1] be restored and transformed into a day devoted to accounting for our relationships with the animals in our society which depend on us for their health and well-being. As Richard Schwartz, president emeritus of Jewish Veg, said:

“Just as *Tu Bishvat*, a day intended for tithing fruit trees for Temple offerings, was reclaimed in the 16th century by mystics as a day for healing the natural

world on which our lives depend, it is important that a restored and transformed *Rosh Hashanah LaBeheimot* (New Year for Animals) become a day devoted to increasing awareness of Judaism's powerful teachings on compassion for animals and as a *tikkun* (healing) for the horrible ways that animals are treated today on factory farms and in other settings."

Israeli Rabbi Adam Frank said, "I applaud this initiative and effort to bring to fruition the awareness that Jewish Tradition expects of humanity toward the animal kingdom."

[Other quotations can be added and/or substituted, such as those at the beginning of this book.]

Rosh Chodesh Elul starts on the evening of August 27 in 2022.

The coalition of organizations is planning many celebrations this year with the hope that they will increase from year to year, just as occurred with *Tu Bishvat*. [Several examples should be given here.]

The coalition believes that restoring this ancient Jewish holiday is especially important today because a shift away from animal-based diets, in addition to lessening the mistreatment of animals, would reduce the current epidemic of diseases that is afflicting the Jewish and other communities, and would also reduce environmental and climate change threats that are greatly increased by the massive exploitation of animals for food.

In addition, the supporting organizations believe that a proper restoration and transformation of the holiday would have the following additional benefits: show that Judaism is able to apply our eternal teachings to new situations; improve the image of Judaism in the eyes of people concerned about animals, veganism and vegetarianism, the environment, and related issues, by reinforcing a compassionate side of Judaism;

bring back some young, idealistic Jews who currently feel alienated from Judaism—especially those who are committed to vegetarianism, veganism, animal rights, and related issues—by restoring/transforming a holiday that they can more closely relate to and find relevant, meaningful, and appealing; challenge Jews to creatively make the holiday meaningful, thereby helping to revitalize Judaism.

Lists of supporting organizations, supporting rabbis, and supporting Jewish leaders are below. Among the supporting organizations are Aytzim: Ecological Judaism, Hazon: The Jewish Lab For Sustainability, Jewish Veg, the Jewish Vegetarian Societies of the UK and of Israel, and Shamayim: Jewish Animal Advocacy. Among the supporting rabbis are Nathan Lopes Cardozo, Adam Frank, Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, David Rosen, and David Wolpe. Among the supporting leaders are the directors of the Jewish organizations mentioned above.

At the end of the press release, add lists of Jewish organizations, rabbis, and other influential Jews that support the restoration and transformation of the ancient Jewish holiday.

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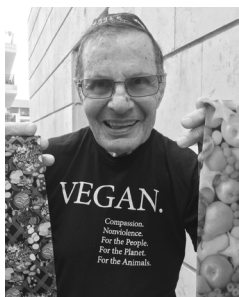
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ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

LANTERN PUBLISHING & MEDIA was founded in 2020 to follow and expand on the legacy of Lantern Books—a publishing company started in 1999 on the principles of living with a greater depth and commitment to the preservation of the natural world. Like its predecessor, Lantern Publishing & Media produces books on animal advocacy, veganism, religion, social justice, humane education, psychology, family therapy, and recovery. Lantern is dedicated to printing in the United States on recycled paper and saving resources in our day-to-day operations. Our titles are also available as ebooks and audiobooks.

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Restoring and Transforming the Ancient Jewish New Year for Animals:

An Idea Whose Time Has Come

The publication of this book is part of a bold campaign championed by Dr. Richard Schwartz and other Jewish activists to restore the ancient Jewish holiday that was initially used to tithe animals for sacrifices and to transform it into a day devoted to increasing awareness of Judaism's many teachings about treating animals compassionately and how the current treatment of animals on factory farms and other settings seriously violates these teachings. It is a continuation of Dr. Schwartz's over 40-year effort to show that plant-based diets are most consistent with Jewish teachings on preserving our health, treating animals with compassion, protecting the environment, conserving natural resources, helping hungry people, and pursuing peace.

At a time when animal-based diets and agriculture contribute significantly to the massive mistreatment of animals, heart disease, cancer, and other life-threatening diseases, climate change and other environmental threats to humanity, the wasteful use of land, water, energy, and other resources, widespread hunger, and the potential for future pandemics, the book's essential messages show the relevance of Judaism's eternal values to current issues.

The book's many supporting blurbs from Jewish organizations, rabbis, and other influential Jews show that reforming and transforming the ancient Jewish holiday is indeed an "idea whose time has come."

Please use the book's messages to join this initiative that can help leave a decent, healthy, compassionate, environmentally sustainable world for future generations.

"This project fulfills and advances the central mitzvah of the Torah: choose life."—**Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg**, former President of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership; author of *The Jewish way: Living the Holidays*



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