JEWISH VEGANISM and VEGETARIANISM

STUDIES AND NEW DIRECTIONS

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Contrasting and Overlapping Moralities

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Veganism is often presented as the highest ideal for anyone who is concerned about animal rights or opposed to what deep ecology calls "speciesism." In this essay, I explore whether veganism is an ideal moral practice and whether veganism can be affirmed as an authentic or ideal Jewish practice.

If veganism represents the ideal, then people's choices from best to worst would fall on a spectrum from veganism to vegetarianism to eating a modicum of meat to eating meat frequently. This spectrum can fit within a wider spectrum, whose extremes run from not using animals at all to using them however one wishes. The fundamental question behind that wider spectrum is what kind of dominion or dominance, if any, humanity may exert over other animals.[1] If dominion is the principle underlying our current food system, the opposite ethic would be to reject any use of animals, not just as a source of food but for any other purpose, including entertainment or labor. This ethic, often called "abolitionist veganism," can be summed up in the words of one of its leading proponents, Gary L. Francione: "There is veganism and there is animal exploitation. There is no third choice."[2]

In Judaism, though, there is a clear third choice. The ideal of covenant that is so fundamental to the Torah's understanding of the human-divine relationship also shapes a mutualistic understanding of people's interactions with other animals.

Of course, dominion also plays a large role in Jewish thinking about animals. It is true that the concept of dominion has strong roots in God's declaration in Genesis 1:28 that humanity will "exercise dominion [*ur'du*] over the fish of the sea and the bird of the skies and over every animal treading upon the land." It is also true that in normative Judaism, dominion—or even more hierarchically, domination (either word could translate the rabbinic concept of *r'diyah* derived from this verse)—is seen as the foundation of humanity's relationship to animals. Looked at from the perspective of dominion, the many rules in the Torah protecting animals appear to be stopgap measures to prevent dominion from becoming full-blown exploitation, promoting what we would call animal welfare.

However, I hope to show that even though dominion is highlighted in Genesis 1, it cannot provide a sufficient explanation for the many laws about animals in the Torah. In fact, covenant provides a deeper explanation for those laws, as well as for the narrative evidence that describes ancient Israelites' relationships with their animals. Because covenant is based on mutuality, it provides a stronger foundation for ecological ethics. I call this approach "covenantalism" (without intending the Christian meanings of that term).

If covenant is the ideal, however, the question of veganism looks substantially different. The only way to create a covenantal relationship is for humans to be directly involved with animals. The normative vegan understanding would see rights as intrinsic to animals, giving them standing and moral worth independent of human choices and ideas. But the covenantal equivalent of rights—whether possessed by a human or animal subject—would instead be that there is a human or society-wide obligation to that subject.[3] Because a covenantal perspective recognizes that humanity, like all other species, must use its fellow species, it is concerned with how to use them well and how to be used well by them. Covenantalism necessarily affirms some of the ways animals may be used for human ends, as long as those ends are achieved in a way that is mutually beneficial on a species level. A vegan perspective might instead focus on minimizing or eliminating many human-animal interactions and dependencies out of a desire for purity or because it believes that the capacious power human beings have to control other creatures will distort every interaction toward exploitation.

Although elements of both perspectives can be found in Jewish texts, along with teachings that outright reject any concept of animal rights or subjecthood, in different historical contexts one or another of these perspectives dominates. The Torah's understanding of covenant can be used to establish a baseline to measure human-animal relationships in subsequent stages of Jewish literature and thought. Those eras and genres characterized by a covenantal perspective are less favorable to a purist vegan ideology, whereas those that base morality on the individual and extrapolate that morality to our relations with animals are more favorable to veganism.

DEFINING COVENANT

We can better explore this question by first defining covenant in contrast with symbiosis on one hand and contract on the other. In addition to being beneficial to both sides, like symbiosis, a covenant entails rights and responsibilities, like a contract.

Like a symbiotic relationship but unlike a contract, a covenant exerts its force across generations. However, symbiosis is determined by ecological necessity, whereas a covenant is rooted in more than biology and its power is more than unconscious or instinctual. Conversely, covenant is not confined to the realm of societal norms and human intention, the way a contract would be. Rather, a relationship that is covenantal can embrace what is human and what is more-than-human and can include the natural world or nonhuman creatures, as well as the divine. Unlike symbiosis or contract, a covenant may posit or define the nature of what is right and good, in a way that portrays its terms as "eternal" or divinely given.[4] Finally, covenant always has a sacred dimension.

DOMESTICATION

The centrality of covenant in all stages of Israelite religion is indisputable. What is less obvious is that the very idea of covenant is modeled on the Israelites' understanding of their relationships with their domesticated animals, as we shall see. The relationships humanity establishes with other animal species through domestication are world-changing and culturally determinative.[5] Although domestication can be understood as a process of domination, it can equally be understood as forging both a symbiosis and a covenant between a human community and another species. Plants and animals tamed by humans also in a real sense tame the human community, teaching humans to tend them and take responsibility for their well-being.[6] Neither exploitation nor dominion (as it is commonly understood) are the best lens for understanding such relationships.

Domestication creates a covenant-like relationship where the individual animals we use have the right to have their intrinsic needs met. These include being well nourished, being allowed to reproduce, and working only in ways that fit their capacities. On the human side, domestication imposes the obligation to allow animals to fulfill their needs, but it also includes the right to take an animal's life for food and sacrifice. Ethically speaking, the Torah's laws about animals focus on the covenantal aspect of our relationships with domesticated species. The Torah virtually bans hunting because the laws about taking the life of a wild animal are so restrictive. Theologically speaking, these covenantal relationships shaped the Israelite understanding of the divine.

COVENANT IN THE TORAH

The simplest definition of *b'rit* (covenant) in the Torah is that it is a kind of contract that is binding on future generations. Its ability to bind future generations is

tightly bound to its sacred character. Explicit covenants that use the term *b'rit* are made between God and a human progenitor like Abraham. The Torah is often understood as the substance of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. Covenants are also made between individuals, like Jacob and Laban, and between peoples, like Isaac's household and the Gerari Philistines.

The very first covenant God makes is not with humans but with all animals. After the flood, God/*Elohim* informs Noah,

> And I, here I am erecting my covenant [*b'riti*] with you all and with your seed after you, and with the soul/life of every animal [*kol nefesh ha-chayah*] that is with you. . . . And I will establish my covenant with you all, and all flesh will not again be cut off by the flood's waters and there will never again be a flood to destroy (all) the land/Earth. . . . This is the sign of the covenant that I am giving between Me and between you all and between every living animal/creature [*nefesh chayah*] that is with you, for generations forever. My bow I put in the clouds, and it will become a covenant sign [*ot b'rit*] between Me and the land. And it will (happen) when I cloud over the land, and the bow appears in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant, and no more will waters become a flood to destroy all flesh. . . . an eternal covenant between God and between every living creature. . . . This is the covenant sign that I am erecting between Me and all flesh that is on the land. (Genesis 9:9–17)[7]

All other biblical covenants are preceded by and derive from this first covenant with all life, which is also a covenant with the land or Earth itself. Its importance is underscored by the sevenfold use of the term *b'rit* in this passage. Like every divine *b'rit*, this covenant, sometimes called the "rainbow covenant," protects all generations forever. Nevertheless, while the *b'rit mei Noach* is predicated on a divine obligation to all creatures, it is unlike most other covenants because it does not impose obligations on the animals or on humanity as covenantal partners.[8]

God's covenant with all animals ascribes a higher moral standing to animals than has been the norm in modern society. Animals are subjects and merit covenantal care, and here humanity is not granted a relationship with divinity separate from them. This point cannot be overemphasized. That animals have standing is reflected at a more fundamental level in the Torah's use of the same vocabulary for human and animal bodies: both are called a *nefesh*, soul or self.[9]

The part of the flood story immediately preceding the rainbow covenant, however, creates a radical distinction between humans and animals. In Genesis 1, even though humans are granted dominion, they are also told they will share the *yerek eisev*, the green plants, with the animals (1:29–30).[10] After the flood,

human beings are invited to eat the other animals: "like the green grass I give you it all" (Genesis 9:3). At the same time, taking a human life, by animal or human, is condemned:

> Only your blood for your lives I will seek, from/by[11] the hand of every animal [*miyad kol chayah*] I will seek it, and from/by the hand of the human. One who spills the blood of the human, by the human, his blood will be spilled, for in *Elohim*'s image He made the human. (Genesis 9:5–6)

These verses imply that even though a covenant was established between God and all the animals after the flood, no such covenant was established between humans and other animals. On the contrary, the dominion described in Genesis 1:28, which may hint at domestication and *convivencia*, is replaced by "a terror of you and a dread of you [that] will be over every animal of the earth [*chayat ha-aretz*]" (Genesis 9:2).[12]

What substitutes for any covenantal relationship between humans and other animals is a check on humans: "Every crawling thing which lives will be for you for eating. . . . But the flesh with its *nefesh* [soul/life], its blood, you will not eat" (Genesis 9:4). The blood of every animal, declared to be off-limits, is not yet declared sacred, though it is sacrosanct. This rule is not made part of the rainbow covenant; it focuses not on establishing relationships but on limiting human power and abuse.

THE COVENANT OF ISRAEL AND THE COVENANT OF BLOOD

We need to examine the ritual life of biblical Israel to show that even though humanity was not called to have a covenantal relationship with animals, the Israelites were. A strong intimation of that relationship is that domestic animals were required to rest from work on the Sabbath, the same way that people were (Exodus 20:10, 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:14).[13] The Sabbath itself is described as "an eternal covenant" between God and Israel, not just in Torah but throughout scripture.[14]

Were the animals seen as partners in this covenant, or were they merely subsumed under the aegis of their owners? The language of Exodus 23:12 suggests the former: "You will stop *in order* that your ox and your donkey will rest, and the child of your maidservant and the stranger will be re-souled" (emphasis added).[15] Owners must keep the Sabbath so that they will let their animals and servants' children (not just their servants) rest—not vice versa.[16] The covenant of the Sabbatical year, "the Sabbath of Sabbaths" (Leviticus 25:4), includes even the wild animals as participants (Leviticus 25:7).

The prohibition against eating blood played a covenantal role in Israel's life. The blood, rather than simply being off-limits as it was described in the Noah story, is reserved for sacred use:

> Any man from the children of Israel who would slaughter an ox or sheep or goat . . . and did not bring it to the entry of the meeting tent . . . blood/bloodguilt is accounted to that man, he has spilled blood, and that man will be cut off from among his people. . . . In order that when the children of Israel will bring their sacrifices . . . to *YHVH*, to the entry of the meeting tent . . . And the priest will cast the blood upon *YHVH*'s altar . . . an eternal statute this will be for them for their generations. . . . And every man that would eat any blood, I will set my face against the person/soul [*nefesh*] that eats the blood, and she will be cut off from among her people. For the *nefesh* of the flesh is in the blood, and I gave it to you all for the altar, to atone for your lives/souls [*nafshoteichem*], for the blood will atone through the *nefesh*. (Leviticus 17:3–11)

This passage from Leviticus assumes that everyone would be able to bring their animal to the meeting tent or *Ohel Mo'ed*, also called the *Mishkan*, for slaughter. Deuteronomy, imagining that the final resting place of the ark, the Temple, will be too far for some, allows slaughter away from the altar, so that "you may eat in your gates with all the desire of your *nefesh*" (12:21). Nevertheless, the sacredness of the blood is declared with equal force:

> Only be strong against eating the blood, for the blood is the *nefesh*, and you will not eat the *nefesh* with the flesh. You all will not eat it, onto the ground you must spill/pour it like water. You will not eat it, so that it will go well for you and for your children after you, when you do what is upright in *YHVH*'s eyes. . . . And the blood of your sacrifices you will pour out on *YHVH*'s altar . . . and the flesh you may eat. (Deuteronomy 12:23–25, 27)

Because blood is reserved for the altar, it must be poured out "like water" whenever one is away from the altar to prevent it from being used for any other purpose. This imperative is enjoined in a way that is characteristically covenantal, "so that it will go well for you and for your children after you," defined by its impact on future generations.

The life or *nefesh* of the animal, localized in blood, had two sacred roles. One, reflected more strongly in Leviticus, was that the animal's blood/*nefesh* could be offered to facilitate atonement for a human supplicant's *nefesh*. In this manner, the blood served as an adjuvant in Israel's covenantal relationship with God. The other, reflected more strongly in Deuteronomy, was that

offering the blood/*nefesh* on the altar is what enabled the flesh of the animal itself to be eaten.[17]

Sacrificial animals could only come from domesticated species, such as cows, sheep, or goats, which meant that people lived in close relation to animals that were sacrificed. Domestic animals played a role in society that was essential not only for material and economic reasons but also for spiritual ones. However, as we are seeing, animals were more than just providers of food, labor, and sacrificial blood. According to Mary Douglas, the consecration of the firstborn of the Israelites' flocks and herds, like the consecration of their own firstborn children, is strong evidence that "the herds and flocks which share the lives of their owners, travel with them, and provide their sustenance . . . come under the terms of the covenant of their masters."[18] Just as the people of Israel are "singled out for the honour of being consecrated to God," so are "the cloven-footed ruminants singled out."[19]

These passages about blood suggest that animals not only played a significant role in the human-divine covenant but were also part of a human-animal covenant. However, if animals are partners in the covenant, this creates a conundrum: how can it be permissible to slaughter and eat them?[20] A crucial piece of evidence that the Torah is aware of this problem is found in Leviticus 17:4, which teaches that one who does not offer the blood of a slaughtered animal on the altar has "spilled blood" and incurred "bloodguilt"—committed a kind of murder—with the consequence that "that man will by cut off from among his people."[21]

The altar rites solved this conundrum.[22] One part of the animal, its blood, was identified with its *nefesh*. Just as *nefesh* and *n'shamah* are related to breath, the blood is the internal breath flowing through the body, carrying the divine life force. By reifying the animal's *nefesh* as the blood, the "personhood" of the animal could be given to God, rendering the remaining body into usable parts.[23] In contrast, the human body in its entirety was called a *nefesh* and acquired holiness through its wholeness. People became *tamei*, cultically impure, when that wholeness was disrupted, and were made *tahor*, cultically pure, by rituals like the *mikveh* or ritual pool that restored wholeness.[24] The Temple was the shared center of these distinct ritual regimes: *korbanot* applied to other animals, and *taharah* applied to humans.

In structuralist terms, the Torah used rituals to inscribe difference onto animal bodies and human bodies. Instead of justifying slaughter by denying the subjecthood and subjectivity of animals, as later Western thought did, ancient Hebrew culture designed slaughter to symbolically or animistically protect that subjecthood.[25]

Were the animals offered up on the altar giving their lives for a holy purpose that served both human and animal? Could one imagine, or did the Israelites

imagine, that the dominion asserted by humans over other species also served those species? The arguments I have given so far depend on an expansive interpretation of the sacrificial system. A more direct answer to these questions can be arrived at through the biblical metaphor of sheep and shepherd.

THE COVENANTAL ROLE OF THE SHEPHERD

Perhaps the most important evidence for covenantalism can be found in the fact that the human-animal relationship, in the figure of shepherd and flock, became a prophetic metaphor for God's relationship to Israel.

Shepherding is portrayed in the Torah as the originary human-animal relationship, both on the mythical level (in the person of Abel) and historically (the occupation of the patriarchs). One of the matriarchs is even named "ewe" or *rachel*. In the Joseph story, his brothers take pains to insist they are shepherds and not cow herders when they come before Pharaoh, contrary to Joseph's wishes (Genesis 46:31–47:4).

In the Torah, only Jacob, the master of animal husbandry and shepherd par excellence (Genesis 30:32–43), refers to God as shepherd, once when he blesses Joseph's sons in the name of "the God who shepherds me [*haro'eh oti*]" (Genesis 48:15), and once when he blesses Joseph (Genesis 49:24). Since the number of examples in the rest of scripture is overwhelming, I review just a handful. Psalm 23 contains one of the most well-known images of God as the good shepherd:

> *YHVH* is my shepherd, I will lack nothing. The One makes me crouch alongside rich fields of grass, leads me beside calm/restful waters. . . . Your staff and Your signet—these will comfort me. (23:1–2, 4)

Similarly, Jeremiah (31:9) says, "The One who scattered Israel will gather him and guard him, like a shepherd [would] his flock." As Israel's shepherd, God cares so tenderly for the lambs that He carries them like a nursing mother: "Here, *Adonay YHVH* will come with strength . . . like a shepherd, the One will pasture His flock, in His arm the One will gather lambs, and carry them in His bosom" (Isaiah 40:11).

The shepherd is also the model for righteous human leadership. Ezekiel 34, an extended meditation on shepherding, offers a particularly rich example, comparing good leadership with the virtues of a good shepherd, condemning bad shepherds who feed themselves and not the sheep. Zechariah denounces the elite by comparing them to a shepherd who does not care about what happens to his sheep after they are sold (11:3–4) and describes the sinful shepherd as one who does not heal the broken or care for the young and who eats (!) the healthy (11:16).

More pointedly, in these chapters, God's covenant is explicitly compared to the shepherd's. Zechariah (11:10) cuts up his shepherd's staff to symbolize that God has annulled a divine covenant. In Ezekiel (34:25), God promises to establish a *b'rit shalom* or covenant of peace in which the sheep (Israel) will no longer be preyed on.[26]

Why is the primary human-animal metaphor not herder and cattle but shepherd and sheep? It may be because one can fulfill essential needs for food and clothing from sheep by harvesting milk and wool without killing the animal. Also, even though cows like sheep were herded and sacrificed, they were also used for agricultural labor, which was sometimes seen as a kind of enslavement (e.g., Ezekiel 34:27), whereas sheep were not. (This may explain why many sacrifices using cows required a heifer or calf that had never been worked.) There may be an allegorical dimension to sheep and shepherd: a shepherd will generally lead his or her sheep by walking in front of them or alongside them, whereas cows are driven from behind.[27] This detail suggests a more mutualistic relationship wherein both parties respond freely to each other.

THE ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The importance of shepherding also reflects the ecological constraints of the land of Canaan. Only a portion of the rocky, hilly land settled by the ancient Israelites could be farmed. Much of the land was better suited to herding sheep or goats. Some aspect of these differences allowed the ancient Israelites to see sheep as the species participating most completely in a covenant with their shepherd.

The constraints of the land are reflected in the rules for kosher animals. Mammals that chew their cud and have split hooves are the only land animals considered *tahor* (cultically pure) and permissible for food (Leviticus 13:3–8; Deuteronomy 1:4–8). I propose that it was not ritualism or symbolism but ecology that first determined the rules about which species of mammals were permitted to be eaten.[28] Ruminant animals can make use of marginal land growing grasses inedible to humans, and animals with split hooves can graze on rocky land that would make for poor farming. From a purely ecological perspective, these rules permit only species that do not compete with humans for land or food.[29]

These species allowed humans to sustainably derive the most sustenance from agriculturally marginal land by herding animals that can graze there, especially sheep and goats, and eating them. Conversely, these constraints of hoof and stomach would compel some people to live as shepherds and goatherds, leading their animals from one wild area to the next, maximizing the flock's growth

while limiting its impact on the land. Moreover, the land would be used best for this purpose if it were not fenced off. This also meant it would remain part of the commons and continue to function as habitat for wild animals.

Land that could be cleared of rocks and was flat or could be made flat through terracing, and therefore farmed relatively easily, would have formed a separate realm that was more intensely managed by humans and would be subject to ownership. Each realm could maintain a variety of species in a self-contained way, with cows, for example, fitting more into the human agricultural realm and sheep more into the realm of unowned mountain wilds. This categorization fits an idealized model of Creation, where the proper species in their proper domains represent the divine order, each set of species having its own set of sacred relationships. Sheep would then represent the greater natural realm, and the possibility of harmony in that realm between humans, animals, and the land.

Of course, the ancient Israelites knew full well that a shepherd lived off his or her flocks not only by shearing and milking them but also by slaughtering them.[30] Nevertheless, this relationship, envisioned as a covenant, provided a model or image for them of how God would take care of them.[31]

From the metaphor of the shepherd, we can draw several conclusions about the concepts underlying the ideal relationship between humans and domesticated animals. Eating animals and using animals for sacrifice were not seen as events in which animals functioned as objects, even sacred ones. Instead, the relationship between human and animal was characterized by mutual support. This relationship in its totality was aimed at achieving a covenantal level of care and responsibility, which included both nurturing life and giving death. Most important, this relationship served as a model for the human relationship and covenant with the Divine.

DOMESTICATED ANIMALS VERSUS WILD ANIMALS

A shepherd and his or her flock wandering through wild pasture are also wandering in the space between domesticated and wild realms. Genesis already assumes a world where some animals are tame or domesticated, since the Creation story specifies that both the wild animal, the *chayah*, and the domesticated animal, the *b'heimah*, are created from the earth (Genesis 1:24–25, 2:20).[32] When the animals are brought to the first human to be named in Genesis 2:19, the act of naming has a quality of domestication.

Most laws about animals in the Torah enjoin people to protect what may be called the rights of domesticated animals: not muzzling an ox to prevent it from eating the grain it threshes (Deuteronomy 25:4), not yoking together two different

burden (Exodus 23:5, Deuteronomy 22:4), allowing a mother to nurse her young for seven days (Leviticus 22:27). All appear to have consideration for the subjectivity and intrinsic needs of the creatures we care for and can fit under the rubric of animal welfare.[33] Not taking the life of a parent and its offspring in the same day (Leviticus 22:28, called *oto v-et b'no*) can also be perceived in that light, even though it applies whether or not the parent and child are aware of each other. It is one of several laws that valorize the relationship between parent and child (see below). The same values may be at the root of the prohibition against "cooking a kid in its mother's milk" (Exodus 23:19, 34:26 Deuteronomy 14:21).[34] If that interpretation is correct, then the prohibition would primarily be about honoring the milk that gives life along with the blood that is life—a rule that has little or no direct impact on animal welfare but is redolent with covenantal significance.

If domestication in human-animal relationships has the nature of covenant, then one would expect the laws of the Torah to make ritual and ethical distinctions between domesticated and wild animals. In fact, there are three laws that focus explicitly on wild animals. In the case of the *Shmitah*, the Sabbatical year, agricultural lands rest from being worked by people and domesticated animals just as on the Sabbath. In addition, wild animals, along with people and domestic animals, have the right to enter any field and eat whatever grows by itself (Leviticus 25:7; Exodus 23:11). The inclusion of wild animals here widens the sphere of moral concern (and is reminiscent of Eden—see below).

The commandment to chase away a mother bird if one wishes to take her eggs or nestlings, called *shiluach ha-kein* (Deuteronomy 22:6–7), also concerns wild animals because the law applies "when a bird's nest happens to be before you on the way in any tree or on the ground."[35] Like the law of *oto v-et b'no*, this law commands respect for parent-child relationships, but wild creatures have rights not extended to domestic creatures. The end of Deuteronomy 22:7 further explains that the reward for sending away the mother is "in order that it will go well for you and you will lengthen days"—a covenantal phrase that echoes the commandment to honor one's parents "in order that your days will be lengthened and in order that it will go well for you" (Deuteronomy 5:16).[36]

The same covenantal reward of long life is promised for not eating blood (Deuteronomy 12:25). Since blood is the element of the body most connected to breath and soul, to flow, and hence most connected to life, all blood was out of bounds for human use, whether the blood came from a wild or domesticated animal, and the covenantal punishment for eating it was "being cut off" (Leviticus 17:10, 17:14). But the third law in question specifically differentiates the ritual treatment of a wild animal's blood. In Leviticus 17:13, we are instructed that if a person takes the life of any kosher wild animal (*chayah*) or bird captured in hunting,

they must "spill/pour out its blood and cover it with dirt." This commandment, called *kisui ha-dam*, underscores the fact that one may not make use of a wild animal's *nefesh* even for the sacred altar. It is as if one were giving the essence of the animal a proper burial.[38]

Kisui ha-dam did not apply to domesticated species.[39] Their blood could be offered on the altar, but if that were not possible, their blood had to be poured out "like water" (Deuteronomy 12:16, 12:24, 15:23)—meaning the blood of domestic animals did not require special treatment beyond being spilled on the ground to make it unusable for any secular purpose. It seems paradoxical that a domestic animal's blood was treated with greater sanctity in the Temple but lesser sanctity outside it. One way to conceptualize these rules is to imagine that the blood poured out on the altar was offered not only on behalf of human petitioners but also on behalf of all the animals of that species that were slaughtered anywhere.

Why was a domestic animal treated differently? Its life was in the hands of its caretakers, herders, midwives, and farmers. Hands that nurtured the animal's life were permitted to give it death as well. Because all creatures must die, this was not considered a violation of life but an act of respect for the life that one had cared for, as one may infer from the metaphor of God as shepherd. Having such power over the life of an animal would make sense to most pet owners, who would choose to give their animal a "good death" at the end of its life, rather than wait until whatever natural cause of death overcomes it.

In contrast, human beings have done nothing to give wild animals life, so there is neither responsibility nor right to give them death.[40] This is reflected in the measures applied to their slaughter.

THE PROPHETS

Scripture returns to the theme of covenant repeatedly. But before covenant, there was the flood and the fall, and before those, Eden. Covenant happens when the Edenic state is already shattered, when God has to promise not to destroy the world because humanity will tempt God to destroy it again in the future (Genesis 8:21). When people think about veganism in the Torah, they tend to think first about the conditions of the Garden of Eden, before the first covenant, where human and animal ate a perfectly vegan diet and shared the same food:

> I have given to you all every plant/grass seeding seed which is on the face of all the land and every tree which has in it tree-fruit seeding seed, for you it will be for eating, and for every animal . . . and for every bird . . . and for every crawler . . . in which there is a living soul [*nefesh chayah*]. (Genesis 1:29–30)

The laws of the Torah that delineate the ideal of Eden also delineate a world where Eden can be partly re-created every seven years for the whole Sabbatical year, when people stop farming and share whatever grows naturally with each other and with wild animals.[41] This echo of Eden, unlike Eden itself, is very distinctly bounded by covenant, as is clear from the blessings and curses of Leviticus 26 that come if the land is not allowed to rest.

But the prophets envision an end of time that will be a fully realized return to Eden, when predation will end; when lion and calf, leopard and kid, wolf and lamb will lie down together; and the lion will eat straw "like cattle" (Isaiah 11:6–7). It is hard to imagine that these images were meant as prescriptions for the redemption of nature, rather than as metaphors.[42] But if vegans are looking for a biblical model, they have both the original Eden and the future Eden. However, these worlds would seem to be ecologically impossible and contrary to Nature as we know it.

The model of the shepherd is not entirely absent from that future Eden. After enumerating its unlikely pairings of prey and predator, Isaiah 11:6 declares that "a child will lead them." Nor is the theme of covenant absent. Hosea (2:20) says in God's name, "I will cut a covenant for them on that day, with the wild animal of the field and the bird of the sky and crawler on the ground, that I will break bow and sword and battle from the land and they will all lay down in safety." In this verse Hosea returns us to a world that is fully like Eden, where all will be unafraid of each other and fully like the rainbow covenant, where all the animals are gathered under one dispensation with the people and the land.[43]

RABBINIC TEACHINGS ON ANIMALS

Classical rabbinic texts expand the covenantal dimensions of human-animal relationships in some ways and diminish them in other ways. The image of the good shepherd as a model for godliness lives on in the Midrash (collections of rabbinic interpretation) in stories about the prowess and compassion of shepherds Moses and David that illustrate their virtue.[44] The laws that the rabbis derive from the Torah entail even more obligations on the part of human beings toward their animals than can be found in the Torah. Among these was the principle that one must feed one's animals before feeding oneself (derived from Deuteronomy 11:15) and the prohibition against neutering animals (derived from Leviticus 22:24), both of which resonate with the idea of covenant.[45]

The rabbis also derived extensive laws from the requirement that wild animals have access to Sabbatical produce. Fences were to be left open or taken down during the Sabbatical year so that wild animals could reach the fields, and people were only

allowed to eat a species of produce in their house if it was still growing in fields where wild animals could eat it.[46] The rabbis articulated the complex rules of slaughter as well, which maximized the fulfillment of two principles important in the Torah: that as much of the blood should leave the body as possible and that the animal should feel the least pain possible. Perhaps most important, the rabbis articulated an overarching rule against causing animals suffering, *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*, as a general framework to explain the detailed laws and attitude of the Torah.[47]

These rules, of course, applied to the Jewish people rather than to all humanity. In rabbinic literature, as in Torah, there seems to be no conception of covenant between animals and humans in general. It is true that the rabbis thought that taking any part of a living animal for food was forbidden to all humanity.[48] However, this principle, derived from the prohibition against eating blood enjoined on Noah in Genesis 9:4, is better characterized as harm reduction, without any hint of caretaking or mutuality. On the contrary, the response of animals to the advent of human predation after the flood—that they will have "a terror of you and dread of you" (Genesis 9:2)—was interpreted by *Genesis Rabbah* to mean that after the flood, humanity lost its dominion over the animals.[49] A commentary on this teaching attributed to Rashi even states that the meaning of dominion before the flood was exactly the opposite of "terror and dread": when Adam called, the animals would come to him.[50]

Even though the rabbis established an ethic of responsibility toward animals, the Midrash reports a question from Rav that undermines that ethic. Rav asks, "What does it matter to the Holy One whether one slaughters [by beginning to cut] from the throat or slaughters from the back of the neck?" He answers that God's only intention was "to refine the [human] creatures" by challenging them to uphold an arbitrary commandment.[51] According to Rav's opinion, the needs of the animal and even the importance of separating the sacral blood from the flesh are not the main points of the law. In a similar vein, rabbinic law expansively elaborated the rule against cooking a kid in its mother's milk to include cooking, eating, and benefiting from all mixtures of meat and milk, called *basar v-chalav* or *basar b-chalav*, while forswearing the quest for the rule's meaning.[52]

On the level of lore and legend, however, the rabbis explicitly extended the idea of covenant to other animals, even inventing what sound like new covenants that were hardly hinted at in the Torah. For example, the Midrash, discussing the instruction to throw nonkosher meat "to the dog" (Exodus 22:30),[53] explains that dogs deserve this gift as a reward for keeping silent when the Israelites were leaving Egypt.[54] God, as it were, establishes through this verse a covenant with dogs to be carried out by humans.[55] Similarly, the commandment to bury a wild animal's blood is interpreted as a reward for the wild animals and birds who,

according to Midrash, buried Abel's body after he had been slain by Cain.[56] This explicitly elevates *kisui ha-dam* to the level of a covenant.

Furthermore, *Kisui ha-dam* became the rabbinic archetype for the requirement to carry out each commandment in a way that showed respect. The rabbis derived this principle, called *kavod la-dam* or *k'vod ha-dam*, "respect for the blood" or "respecting the blood," from the rabbinic understanding that a person is required to use their hands to spread earth over the blood of a slaughtered wild animal. The law could not be fulfilled by using one's foot to push earth over the blood.[57] Although Jewish law applied this principle to the way one carries out any *mitzvah*, the fact that it was applied first to the blood—the *nefesh*—has special meaning. At its root, *kavod la-dam* can be understood in our time as expressing an attitude of deep respect for everything associated with life, an attitude that may also explain the vast elaboration of rabbinic laws about *basar v-chalav*.

Rabbinic texts also denigrated the practice of hunting, turning hunters that appear in scripture, like Nimrod and Esau, into villains,[58] and rejecting the slaughter of wild animals (especially sport hunting) as a type of depravity.[59] Practically speaking, it was very difficult to kill a wild animal in a kosher manner that would allow its flesh to be eaten.[60] Of course, there are hunting cultures, as found among the Native Americans, that consciously see themselves as being in a covenantal relationship of giving and thanksgiving between prey species and humans. However, rabbinic Judaism inherited a shepherding tradition that never developed such an understanding.

It was also a given for the rabbis that animals have souls.[61] The relevant question was not whether they have souls but what kind of souls they have. Are their souls of such a different nature from a human soul that this belief has no bearing on our ethical stance, or is it consequential? Here the rabbis made a firmer distinction between other animals and humans than the Torah did.[62] At the same time, rabbinic lore imagined animals as moral actors in their own right. For example, the animals join Adam in worshiping God,[63] and they can be piously strict about what they eat or when they work.[64]

One important story is the tale of the calf being led to slaughter that runs and hides itself in the folds of Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi's robe. When Rebbe, as he is known, says, "Go, for this [purpose] you were made," the angels afflict him with suffering, saying that since he did not show compassion, he will not receive compassion. His ailment continues until the angels see Rebbe sparing the lives of wild animals living in his house.[65] If Rebbe was punished for sending a calf to do its covenantal mission, does this not mean that this mission was in some sense wrong?

Despite the fabulistic quality of such stories, their moral content was treated as real. The conflicted message of the story of Rebbe and the calf is that the use of

an animal's life cannot be fully justified. Although the covenantal use of animals in the cult was never explicitly rejected, we find frequent expression of the idea that there is a higher moral calling that does not condone sacrifice.[66] A different kind of ambivalence about eating meat is evinced by the rabbinic statement that even though meat was permitted, it should not be eaten by anyone unlearned.[67]

These supererogatory calls to compassion and restraint did not impinge on the fact that rabbinic law requires several *mitzvot* to be performed with products made from parts of animals. Torah parchment, *mezuzah* scrolls, *tefillin* boxes and straps must be made from animal hide; shofars must be made from a ram's horn or the horn of a similar animal.[68] Although the commandments requiring animal products are few, they are central to Judaism.

The overall trend in both Midrash and *halakha* (Jewish law) was to expand on and add to the covenantal elements of the Torah's ethical rules governing human-animal relationships. At the same time, the covenantal framework that encompassed the sacrificial system was overwritten by interpretations that were more moralizing, whereas laws about animals concerning slaughter, milk and meat, and such were reinterpreted by many as *chukim* (statutes without ethical content or reason).

MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Jewish thought from the tenth century onward imbibed the rationalism of Greek (especially Aristotelian) philosophy. Jewish philosophers tended to magnify and emphasize the difference between humans and all the other animals. Many philosophers completely instrumentalize animal lives, leaving no possibility that our relationship with them could have a covenantal element. Saadyah Gaon, the earliest and most extreme example, explains God's directive that humanity "will dominate over the fish of the sea and over the bird of the sky and over every animal and over the land" (Genesis 1:26) in this way:

> The word *v-yirdu* [they will dominate/rule] includes the entire range of devices with which man rules over the animals . . . with fetters and bridles . . . with ropes . . . with weapons of the hunt . . . [and] with cages. . . . The word *vi-d'gat* [over the fish] includes the stratagems for catching fish . . . their consumption, the extraction of pearls . . . the use of . . . skin and bones . . . and He added the word *ha-yam* [of the sea] to include man's subjugation of water; for he finds it within the ground and raises it out. . . . And thus he dams rivers . . . and he uses it to power mills . . . and [He hints at] the construction of ships and boats. . . . And His word *uv-oaf* [and

> over the birds] corresponds to . . . snares . . . the process of taming . . . the preparation of them for foods . . . and potions.[69]

More broadly, Saadyah promulgated the radically anthropocentric position that everything exists to serve us: "When we see the many created beings, we should not be perplexed about what among them is the goal . . . for the goal is humanity."[70]

Maimonides was an exception to the general philosophical attitude toward animals. In *The Guide for the Perplexed*, he emphatically rejects Saadyah's anthropocentrism:

> All the existent individuals of the human species, and all the more, those of the other species of the animals, are things of no value at all in comparison with the whole [of Creation] that exists and endures.[71]

The title of his magnum opus is directed against Saadyah's claim, as Maimonides makes clear when he writes:

> [Many minds] are perplexed . . . over the question of the final end of existence. . . . It should not be believed that all the beings exist for the sake of the existence of humanity. On the contrary, all the other beings too have been intended for their own sakes and not for the sake of something else. Thus, the quest for the final end of all the species of beings collapses.[72]

Elsewhere, Maimonides ridicules the idea that everything is created for humanity's pleasure.[73] It is not surprising that the way he interprets laws concerning animals shows an understanding of their intrinsic needs and a willingness to see those needs on par with human needs. Most famously, he wrote concerning *oto v-et b'no*:

> It is forbidden to slaughter [an animal] and its young on the same day, this being a precautionary measure to avoid slaughtering the young animal in front of its mother. For in these cases animals feel very great pain, there being no difference regarding this pain between humankind and the other animals. For the love and the tenderness of a mother for her child is not consequent upon reason, but upon the activity of the imaginative faculty, which is found in most animals just as it is found in humankind.[74]

He applied similar reasoning to *shiluach ha-kein*: "If . . . the mother is let go and escapes . . . she will not be pained by seeing that the young are taken."[75] Here, however, Maimonides adds a crucial element: "In most cases, this [commandment] will lead to people leaving everything alone." *Shiluach ha-kein*, he claims, not only protects the mother from suffering but also discourages people from interfering in any way with the nest. This interpretation reflects a different attitude

toward wild birds and animals than toward domestic animals, which humans have a right to use.

Not only did Maimonides insist that all creatures exist for their own purposes, he also asserted that the very goodness of Creation is built on this fact:

> If you consider [the] Torah, the notion that we have in view will become manifest. . . . For with reference to none of the things created is the statement made in any way that it exists for the sake of some other things. It only says that God brought every part of the world into existence and that it conformed to its purpose. This is the meaning of the saying: "And God saw that it [is] good." About the whole, it says: "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it [is] very good."[76]

The inherent goodness of the whole of Creation is not grounded in any individual species, but in "the way they are mutually connected."[77] What is of ultimate value is not a single species but the whole woven from them all.

In these passages, Maimonides provides a foundation for animal rights within Judaism, rooted in radical empathy. Though he nowhere suggests that a vegan or vegetarian diet is an ideal to strive for, his positions correlate with aspects of a traditionally vegan perspective, while his radical assertion of empathy would fit with a more covenantal perspective.

While most Jewish philosophers before and after Maimonides were closer to Saadyah, at least two adopted a perspective resonant with animal rights: Yosef Albo and Isaac Arama (both fifteenth century).[78] According to Albo, while the state humanity was born into was vegetarian, something went gravely wrong in the second generation. Cain inferred from the "prohibition" against killing animals that human and animal life were equal. Because of this, says Albo, when Abel sacrificed animals from his flock as an offering, Cain understood Abel's action as murder and murdered him in response.[79]

After the flood, God permitted—or even, as Albo suggests, required—Noah to kill animals to guarantee that humanity would never make the mistake of equating human life with the life of animals from any other species.[80] Thus the precondition under which humans may aspire to return to the ideal state of veganism or vegetarianism is that they recognize humanity's spiritual and moral superiority over other species.

Arama explained that there were three levels of humanity: those without spiritual advancement who should not eat meat at all, per the teaching from the Talmud quoted already; those in the process of becoming learned, who could eat meat; and those who had achieved a level of completion and spiritual perfection. About the last group, Arama says that people who are "whole" in wisdom have always removed

themselves from society and materiality, sought out the wilderness, and distanced themselves from eating anything "from animals."[81] Arama then describes a vegan diet: one should eat "grasses (herbage), seeds, and tree fruit, and other vegetables," based on "the correct advice that the Creator gave to the human species in the time of Creation." For both teachers, veganism was motivated by an aspiration to reach a higher level of spiritual purity, rather than be in a more perfect relationship with animals.

In sum, Jewish philosophy did not adopt the Torah-based rabbinic concept that humans should or could treat their animals with covenantal kindness. On the contrary, Jewish philosophers mostly espoused the idea that everything in Creation, including the animals, was created for the sake of humanity. Even those few like Albo and Arama, who saw veganism as an ideal and criticized humanity's use of animals, still strongly affirmed anthropocentrism. Maimonides uniquely taught that the world and its creatures do not exist for our sakes and that anthropocentrism is fundamentally a mistake. An outlier in most ways, Maimonides's teachings could be used to develop a robust vegan ethos.

KABBALAH AND THE SOULS OF ANIMALS

Kabbalah as it developed after the promulgation of *Sefer Bahir* in thirteenth-century Christian Spain was a reaction against philosophical rationalism, and it has the strongest bearing on our questions. *Sefer Bahir* was the first work to include the themes discussed below that characterize what most people think of as Kabbalah. But there is at least one earlier stratum of Jewish mysticism that is also important: *Sefer Chasidim*, authored by Yehudah Hechasid, one of the Chasidei Ashkenaz or "German pietists" of the twelfth century.

In *Sefer Chasidim*, Yehudah Hechasid insisted that a pious person should be thorough in covering the blood of a slaughtered animal.[82] In a passage that demonstrates the extreme sensitivity to animals shown throughout *Sefer Chasidim*, he wrote:

> When a person slaughters a wild animal [*chayah*] or bird, he should think in his heart, this one that did not sin was slaughtered. . . . How then can a person who is full of sin overcome spilling blood [*sh'fikhut damim*, a term usually meaning murder of a human being] and Hell [*Gehinom*]? And he should consider how the Holy One commanded him to cover an animal's or bird's blood (Lev. 17:13), lest the angel [having] authority over them should say, "How can the blood of this one that did not sin be spilled by the hand of a sinner whose sins are like scarlet and worm?" and they seal with the blood [the decree of] one who is decreed to die.[83]

This powerful perspective could justify vegetarianism at the very least, since it equates slaughter with murder. By enjoining a person to meditate "in his heart" on the animal's innocence, Yehudah Hechasid inculcates a strong moral identification with animals. However, the second half of his comment disassociates this *mitzvah* from respecting the animal itself and from any covenantal relationship between generations of animals and humans. Instead, covering the blood becomes a kind of magic trick to fool the angel who watches over that animal.

Jewish mysticism in Spain incorporated some aspects of Jewish philosophy but rejected many others. Most important, whereas Jewish philosophy on some level rejected the body, insisting that only the soul, mind, or reason was "in God's image," the Kabbalah, starting with *Sefer Bahir*, asserted emphatically that the body was also created fully in the image of God.[84] *Sefer Bahir* taught that only rituals carried out physically could effect cosmic healing and that the purpose of the commandments was to bring blessing to all Creation, not just to Israel or to humanity.[85] Last, *Sefer Bahir* introduced the idea of reincarnation, which evolved in later Kabbalah to include the idea that human souls could reincarnate into nonhuman animals.[86] In these ways, the sphere of moral concern was expanded greatly to include the more-than-human world, and notably all animals.

Moshe ben Nachman, also called Nachmanides or Ramban, was one of the first Torah commentators to thoroughly incorporate Kabbalistic ideas. He explained that humanity was not allowed to eat animals in Eden because their souls are similar in some ways to human souls, since

> they have choice/freedom [*b'chirah*] concerning their good and their sustenance, and they flee from pain and death, and [so] scripture says: Who knows if the spirit [*ruach*] of the children of Adam rises upward, and if the *ruach* of the beast descends below, to the earth? (Ecclesiastes 3:21)[87]

At the same time, Noah gained the right to slaughter and eat animals because he had saved them: "Because Noah rescued [the animals] to keep the species in existence, [God] gave him permission to slaughter and to eat, because their existence was because of him [*ba-avuro*]."[88] This is a step toward the idea of covenant.

There is also an echo of covenant in Ramban's understanding of Adam naming the animals. According to Ramban, Adam was searching for an animal that could name him, just as he could give it a name.

> Any species that would call to him "*Ha-adam*," like his name, and say about him that he [i.e., Adam] is a *nefesh chayah* like him [the animal] . . . he would be a help corresponding to him. [But Adam] called to all of them and did not find for himself a helper that would call [back] to him.[89]

Though Adam's search holds out hope for a covenantal relationship, it is a covenant that is uncompleted or unfulfilled.

One more element of Ramban's thought is important here: his interpretation of *shiluach ha-kein*, sending away the mother bird. He rejects Maimonides's explanation that the reason for the commandment is to avoid causing suffering, instead offering three others: (1) to teach people to be compassionate (i.e., to each other); (2) to avoid any action that would destroy a species; and (3) to honor the "mother of the world," which in Kabbalah means the quality of *Binah* or Understanding that is the womb in which the world is created.

Ramban sees no element of compassion for individual animals in this *mitzvah*. Rather, the divine concern is to protect humans from becoming cruel. Significantly, in distancing himself from Maimonides, Ramban opens his readers' eyes to the idea of taking responsibility for species rather than individuals:

> Scripture will not permit doing [any manner of] destruction that would uproot a species, even though it permits slaughter of a particular species; and behold, one who kills [*ha-horeg*] the mother and the children in one day or takes them . . . it is as if he would cut off that species.[90]

Taking parent and child would not normally threaten a species, and the medievals did not even believe that species could go extinct. But for Ramban, the simple fact that taking mother and child would lead to extinction if extrapolated many times makes it prohibited.[91] There is an implicit covenant here, not limited to domesticated species, that has at its root honoring the source of all life by honoring the life of all the species.

Later Kabbalistic literature included many expressions of the idea that we have a covenantal responsibility to our animals and to all the living beings that we interact with. Moshe Cordovero, in sixteenth-century *Safed*, gave us one of our most explicit and powerful examples:

> [A person should] not uproot a growing thing except for need, nor kill any animal [*ba`al chayyim*] except for need. And he should choose a good/easy death [*mitah yafah*] for them, with a carefully examined knife, to show mercy however is possible. This is the principle: compassion [*chemlah*] [should be] over all existences, to not hurt them . . . unless [it is] to raise them from level to level, from growing to living, from living to speaking, for then it is permitted to uproot the growing thing and to kill the animal, the debt/harm [being outweighed] by the merit.[92]

According to Cordovero, kosher slaughter or *shechitah* has the goal of "a good death." Cordovero coined this application of the term *mitah yafah*, but it comes

from the *Tosefta*, where it has a very different meaning. In the *Tosefta* and Talmud, *mitah yafah* only applies to human beings; specifically, when capital punishment was due to be meted out, the manner of execution had to be a *mitah yafah*, a good or easy death, as defined by the rabbis.[93] Practically speaking, this meant minimizing the victim's pain and not disfiguring their body.

The requirement of *mitah yafah* was derived by the ancient rabbis from the verse, "Love your neighbor/friend as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18), one of the most important ethical principles in the Torah. Classically, this principle applies only to human beings. Cordovero made a radical leap by calling *shechitah* a "good death," implicitly teaching that the command "Love your neighbor" includes animals, who may be seen as neighbors and friends—in other words, as persons.

What defines a good death for Cordovero is not just that an animal should not suffer pain or disfigurement. The animal's soul should also be elevated by the manner and intention through which it was killed and eaten. If one's treatment of any living thing one uses is less than that, "the debt [of killing or taking] outweighs the merit."

Cordovero set an extraordinarily high ethical standard for every act that involves taking from the natural world. Contemporary ecology adds much more depth to this quest for merit. Having responsibility to benefit the souls of the animals we use is the highest order of covenantal relationship one can imagine.

Cordovero can provide inspiration for Jewish animal rights activists, but many Kabbalists, including Isaac Luria and most Chasidic thinkers, tend to understand the elevation of an animal differently: we are not acting on behalf of the animal as a subject or soul but on behalf of the sparks of divinity it contains.[94] The animal is, as it were, a vessel without personhood—and in some teachings, the animal or other vessel we make use of, whether plant or tool or rock, is seen as a prison from which the spark must be liberated.[95] Although this would seem to conflict with the idea that human souls can reincarnate in animals, these perspectives were often integrated.[96] In neither case is the animal a subject in itself, and neither includes the element of covenant between humanity and other animal species.[97]

Nevertheless, according to every Kabbalist, how one treats animals profoundly affects one's ability to elevate the sparks or souls found in them. Kabbalah can therefore undergird a strong vision of animal welfare, but only the Cordoveran lineage leads toward a deeper convenantal vision of our relationships with animals.

ABRAHAM ISAAC KOOK

One of the most important voices in Jewish tradition that can be used to support veganism and animal rights is Abraham Isaac Kook, chief rabbi of Palestine before

the state of Israel was established. Kook's explanations for the laws concerning animals focus on moral lessons. For example, he says that the purpose of *kisui ha-dam*, covering the blood, is to "hide your shame [about eating meat] and your moral weakness."[98] Though this sentiment is powerful, the framework of covenant is absent.

While *kisui ha-dam* applies to wild animals with which people do not have regular relationships, Kook offered similar interpretations of the commandments regarding domestic animals. For example, the laws of slaughter and the prohibition of taking parent and child are meant to implant in a person's heart that

> this must not be an encounter with some ownerless thing, in which there are nothing but automatic reflexes, but rather with a creature which lives and feels, and one must consider its senses and even the emotions of its heart, including sentiments for the life of its family and compassion for its offspring.[99]

The permission to eat meat, for Kook as for Albo, was necessary to teach people to respect human life, but he believed that in Messianic times all people would understand that whenever humans take from animals, it is a kind of theft or murder. He even regarded taking wool and milk as an act of oppression:

> The human being in the weakness of self-love . . . approaches the poor cow and the mute sheep, taking from this one its milk and that one its wool. . . . It is not a moral wrong to take wool from the sheep when the wool's owner, the sheep itself, would be relieved by its removal, or in any case, when to do so would neither distress it nor harm it. It is indecent, however, to take it for one's own benefit when the true, natural owners, the sheep themselves, need it. So it is fitting to see this . . . as a wresting of justice that comes only by means of an attack upon a weaker being. And the case is the same with the milk. . . . According to the holistic view . . . the mother does not live so that one might presumptuously exploit (the milk) for oneself, but rather so that she can suckle her tender young beloved to her with the milk of her teats.[100]

These extended passages show the depth of feeling Kook had for animals as autonomous subjects. There is very little room here for a covenantal interpretation of human-animal relationships because using animals is cast as contrary to justice. Nevertheless, Kook also understood that humanity's role was to lead all Creation and all creatures toward God and toward the good.[101] This role suggests a covenantal relationship to all creatures on a more abstract level.

Kook's strict moral code aligns with the prophetic vision of redemption as a peaceable kingdom where all species live in Edenic harmony. However, even

Kook did not advocate total vegetarianism for his own time, let alone veganism. His reasoning closely followed Albo. According to Kook, humanity had not yet evolved to the level where society could fully respect animal life and still understand how important it is to value human life.[102]

The widespread interpretation that the flood story teaches that divine permission to eat meat was granted as a concession to human violence only becomes normative in more recent times through the influence of teachers like Kook. In this view *kashrut* has the combined purpose of making it difficult to eat meat and spiritually elevating the desire for meat. Though some scholars believe this interpretation to be the intended message of the flood story itself, there are only hints of it found in earlier rabbinic texts. Kook, closest in time to modern veganism, is also its closest ally.[103]

BIFURCATING MORALITIES

The centrality of human-animal relationships in the Torah is not surprising, given that ancient Israelites depended on their draft animals to plow and haul and on their herds to harvest the nourishment of pasture lands. Like every ancient society, whether hunting or herding or farming, to survive they needed to be in close relationship not just to the land but to the animals and plants they shared it with. Covenant was the ancient Israelite concept that guided those relationships.

As we saw, when Jewish thought becomes distant from the world described by the Torah, there is a shift away from a covenantal approach to animals. Instead of seeing ethical rules about animals as the framework for a living, mutual relationship, people tend to interpret those rules through two disparate lenses: either animals are here to serve humanity and the rules about animals reflect human needs, or animals have rights that exist independent of any relationship to humanity, and the rules reflect those rights.

The first lens sees the dominion of Genesis 1 as the foundation of our relationships to other animals. The second is more apt to see the model of Eden in Genesis 2 as the foundation for those relationships.[104] Neither perspective fits the integral meaning of covenant. Whereas dominion is declared an essential characteristic of humanity in Genesis 1, in the context of covenant, dominion means nothing more than the ability to domesticate, to choose which species to ally with in close relationship. The rest of the Torah provides the rules and the spiritual framework for such relationships. The converse idea that the Torah is an extended polemic against meat eating can empower an animal rights or vegan perspective, but it also derails such mutualistic interpretations. Without a covenantal framework, our humanity becomes founded on what we refrain from doing to other animals,

on leaving animals alone rather than being engaged with them. Even in Eden, it is a given that the first human must encounter all the animals before the need for human companionship between an Adam and an Eve can be known.

Paul Shepard said, "The human species emerged enacting, dreaming, and thinking animals and cannot be fully itself without them."[105] We could say the same about the ancient Israelites. The issues raised by the Torah's strictures are broad and significant. But they only make sense in the context of a lasting covenant with other animal species.

VEGANISM AND COVENANTALISM: TRANSCENDING DICHOTOMY

What should we make of the tension between veganism and covenantalism, or between veganism and any ethical system that insists on the importance of animals in society?

Only in a technologically advanced society, disconnected from the land, could one conceive of abolitionist veganism.[106] The ideal of not using animals at all is only imaginable because we have tractors with internal combustion engines that can plow without oxen or horses. But the extraction-based industrial economy that makes this possible is necessarily plagued by oil spills and contamination; by the degradation of soil health because of monocropping, pesticides, and artificial fertilizers; and by loss of habitat caused by development and extraction itself—not to mention global climate disruption. That economy causes far more harm to animals than any shift to veganism would mitigate.

Industrial agriculture could not be much further from a system that respects animals, whether from the perspective of animal welfare or human compassion, whether in terms of rights, covenant, or sustainability. More strongly, our human ancestors made a sacred covenant with the species they adopted, a covenant that is violated every minute that concentrated animal feeding operations exist. There are strong grounds to say that all meat produced through such a system should be forbidden to Jews, according to biblical and rabbinic Judaism.[107]

Other technologies and other methods (like no-till farming), hold the promise of a different kind of agriculture. Even though we cannot arrive at a perfect system without working many years to change our society, a humane system that respects animals is already practiced on a small scale, including in parts of the Jewish community influenced by environmentalism.[108] Even if one embraces veganism as a messianic ideal for the end of history, in the manner of Kook and the prophets, there are so many steps we can take in the interim that accord with both veganism and covenantalism: eliminating factory farming, decreasing every community's meat consumption, using permaculture methods that allow land to

serve as both agriculture and habitat. There is one step that would fit covenantalism but not abolitionist veganism: where possible, returning to an agriculture powered by draft animals instead of petroleum.[109] Even so, changing the role of farm animals in society from consumer products to partners should be a worthy goal for most vegans.

We can measure every institution affecting animal rights and welfare against the sacred covenant that our ancestors believed was the heart of society's relationships with its domesticated fellow travelers. Most changes that help people relate to animals in a covenantal manner will move us in a direction that accords with veganism. Like the prophets, our model of reality can include a recall of Eden, the fantasy ecosystem, along with a covenantal understanding of the real ecosystem, which calls on us to engage with the other creatures and bring healing and blessing to them, rather than destruction.

NOTES

1. Although it is not traditional to refer to humans and "other animals," that is the language Maimonides uses throughout the *Guide for the Perplexed*. I use it here when appropriate.

2. Gary L. Francione, landing page of the Abolitionist Approach, http://www.abolitionistapproach.com (accessed June 7, 2017).

3. The meaning of animal rights in the context of Jewish law and practice is discussed in David Mevorach Seidenberg, "Animal Rights in the Jewish Tradition," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 64–66.

4. This correlates with David Novak's definition of covenant in *The Jewish Social Contract: An Essay in Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 33. Novak, like many interpreters, is not cognizant of the fact that the first covenant is with all creatures, not just with humanity (34).

5. Anthropologist Pat Shipman has even proposed that the reason humans supplanted Neanderthal hominids is because of the advantages provided by their alliance with dog-wolves. See Pat Shipman, *The Invaders: How Humans and Their Dogs Drove Neanderthals to Extinction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

6. David Rindos, *The Origins of Agriculture: An Evolutionary Perspective* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1984); and T. O'Connor, "Working at Relationships: Another Look at Animal Domestication," *Antiquity* 71, no. 271 (1997): 149–56.

7. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

8. Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 135 and 140. One could argue that the verses preceding this passage,

discussed below, impose such obligations on animals and human beings, but those obligations are not represented as part of the covenant.

9. See Leviticus 24:17–18. Similarly, in the next passage one word, *basar*, designates both living flesh and meat. These usages arise from a worldview that does not generally divide the animate from the inanimate or the metaphysical from the physical. See David Mevorach Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology: God's Image in the More-Than-Human World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 354–56.

10. Commentaries debate whether humans and other animals all share the same food (Rashi, commentary to Genesis 1:29), or whether "the fruit of the tree" is especially designated for humans (Nachmanides, commentary to Genesis 1:29).

11. This may mean that any animal that takes a human life will be punished, but Nachmanides (commentary to Genesis 9:6) understands the phrase to mean that God will use animals to exact punishment from human beings. See Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, 155–57.

12. The term *b'heimah* (domesticated animal) does not appear in these verses. This may indicate that any relationship of domestication was annulled by the post-flood permission for humans to be predators.

13. Douglas, *Leviticus*, 136.

14. See, for example, Exodus 31:12–17, esp. 16, and Isaiah 58:13–14.

15. "Re-souled" translates *vayinafeish*, which is close to the word describing God's rest after creating, *vayinafash* (Exodus 31:17). This could suggest a higher level of covenant accessed only by human beings (though contrast it with Deuteronomy 5:14). These passages command rest for draft animals ("your ox and your donkey"); sheep and goats play a different role, as will be discussed shortly.

16. Many of the passages about animals mention not only the servant but also the stranger. If animals are included in the covenant, so are the non-Israelites who come to live among the people as immigrants and refugees. Ultimately, says Leviticus 25:23, we are all strangers and sojourners, *gerim v-toshavim*, in God's eyes.

17. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22* (New York: Random House, 2000), 1476–77.

18. Douglas, *Leviticus*, 137.

19. Ibid., 149.

20. Douglas writes, "Many religions are forced into casuistry to avoid contradiction between their affirmation of life and their act of taking life in sacrifice." Ibid., 68.

21. Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 1353, 1373, and 1474–77.

22. Douglas, *Leviticus*, 137.

23. Certain fat deposits called *cheilev*—the visceral fat, especially the omentum—were also regarded as inherently sacred (Leviticus 3:17, 7:23–7). The omentum is like a lattice surrounding the internal organs; it can contract over an injured internal organ to protect that organ while it heals. As an active organ, it differs radically from fat deposits that store energy.

24. David Mevorach Seidenberg, "Brit Taharah: Woman as Covenantal Body," *Sh'ma* 25, no. 486 (January 20, 1995), 5–6.

25. Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, 144–45.

26. Biblical scholars generally assume that the divine covenant is modeled on ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties between kings and vassal states. However, these chapters suggest that not only the divine covenant but even the relationships between king and people or between king and vassal state were modeled on a shepherd's relationship to the flock, and that the shepherding relationship was primary.

27. Though a few verses, such as 2 Samuel 7:8 and Amos 7:15, describe a shepherd going behind the flock, this portrays the way a shepherd may follow the flock without driving them.

28. Gary A. Rendsburg offers a very different and important interpretation: "Humans are unable to live up to the vegetarian ideal set forth at creation; God compromises and allows humanity to eat meat. But Israel wishes to adhere to that ideal, even in compromised fashion, and therefore Israel consumes only those animals that have not killed other animals. . . . Israel prohibits . . . the consumption of those animals that ingest blood, lest Israel consume blood 'through the backdoor' . . . The vegetarian ideal comes first, and only secondarily were distinguishing characteristics noted." Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Vegetarian Ideal in the Bible," in *Food and Judaism*, ed. Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro, (Omaha, NE: Creighton University Press, 2005), 327.

29. For further discussion, see David Mevorach Seidenberg, "Kashroots: An Eco-History of the Kosher Laws," Neohasid, September 2009, http://www.neohasid.org/torah/kashroots.

30. Proper animal husbandry almost requires the slaughter of most male animals. See Douglas, *Leviticus*, 95–96.

31. Douglas, *Leviticus*, 141 and 149.

32. *Chayah/b'heimah* may also be interpreted as predator/prey, but for our purposes, the contrast of wild/domesticated is more illuminating.

33. The prohibition on mating two different species fits as well (Leviticus 19:19), though it may also be thought of as taking care of animals on a species level. This may include a prohibition on neutering according to some scholars, though that is more likely a rabbinically derived law. See Ellen Goodfriend, "Leviticus 22:24:

A Prohibition of Gelding for the Land of Israel," in *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature*, ed. Roy E. Gane (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 67–92.

34. The reason a goat kid is specified rather than lamb or calf may be because goats have a tendency to wander off from their flock and therefore show the mother-child relationship in greater relief.

35. Note also that although there is a different word for wild and domestic land animals, there is no such distinction for birds, which suggests that birds were never seen as fully domesticated.

36. Why does the verse say "days" instead of "your days"? Homiletically, the latter implies direct benefit to oneself, whereas the former implies benefit for all species affected by the commandment; more broadly, it implies sustainability.

37. In contrast with domestic animals, however, the *cheilev* fat of a wild animal may be used and even eaten.

38. Compare with Ezekiel 24:7, "for her blood was within her, she set it on bare rock, she did not pour it on the earth to be covered over with dirt," and with Job's plea in 16:18, "O earth, do not cover my blood, and may there be no [resting] place for my outcry." "Standing on the blood" as in, "Don't stand on your neighbor's blood" (Leviticus 19:16), may be read as the opposite of covering the blood.

39. It is also possible to explain this as a difference between Deuteronomy and Leviticus, rather than between domestic and wild animals (Douglas, *Leviticus*, 91–93), but here I am reading the Torah synoptically to understand its impact as a whole.

40. Milgrom discusses various interpretations in *Leviticus*, 1481–83; note especially *Midrash Yelamdenu*, 170, quoted in no. 5.

41. David Mevorach Seidenberg, "Genesis, Covenant, Shmitah, Jubilee and the Land Ethic," Neohasid, 2010, http://www.neohasid.org/torah/genesis-shmitah; and David Mevorach Seidenberg, "Shmita: The Purpose of Sinai," *Huffpost*, May 2, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-david-seidenberg/shmita-the-purpose-of-sinai_b_3200588.html.

42. Rendsburg, "The Vegetarian Ideal," 328–29.

43. Hosea, however, being a committed farmer and no shepherd, makes only one passing reference to animal husbandry in 5:6, and a negative one at that.

44. *Exodus Rabbah* 2:2.

45. *Talmud Bavli* (Babylonian Talmud, henceforth *TB*) *Berakhot* 40a and *Gittin* 62a on feeding animals; *Chagigah* 14b and *Shabbat* 110b on neutering animals.

46. For more detail see *Maimonides*, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Shmitah v-Yovel* 7.

47. *TB Bava Metzia* 32b.

48. *Sanhedrin* 59b, *Chullin* 102a, and *Pesachim* 22b.

49. *Genesis Rabbah* 34:12.
50. Rashi (attributed), commentary to verse cited above.
51. *Genesis Rabbah* 44:1.
52. See, for example, *TB Chullin* 113a–116a.
53. A parallel verse, Deuteronomy 14:21, suggests giving the meat to the *ger*, the stranger.
54. *Mekhilta Kaspa* 20, *Exodus Rabbah* 31:9, *Perek Shirah*, *Yalkut Shim'oni* 1:187, based on the verse, "And there will be a great cry in all the land of Egypt . . . and [yet] against all the children of Israel a dog will not sharpen [*yecherats*] its tongue" (Exodus 11:6–7).
55. The Midrash also imagines a covenant between God and the *dukhifat* or hoopoe (*TB Gittin* 68b, *Chullin* 63a), as well as one between Noah or God and the phoenix (*TB Sanhedrin* 108b, *Genesis Rabbah* 19:5). See Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, 345–46.
56. *Genesis Rabbah* 22:8. See note 35 on the inclusion of all birds in the same category as wild animals.
57. *TB Chullin* 87a, *Shabbat* 22a.
58. For example, *Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer* chap. 24, *Genesis Rabbah* 63:13, as well as Torah commentary by Rashi, whose writing, though later, represents a rabbinic viewpoint uninflected by medieval philosophy. See Paul A. Kay and Bob Chodos, "Man the Hunter? Hunting, Ecology, and Gender in Judaism," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, *Ecotheology* 11, no. 4 (December 2006): 494–509.
59. *TB Avodah Zarah* 18b. Nevertheless, one rabbi is described as trapping deer to feed the hungry and then making a Torah scroll from their skins (*TB Bava Metzia* 85b). Note rabbinic lore that the mythical Leviathan, the ultimate wild animal, is destined to be served at a banquet for the righteous. However, only the archangel Gabriel can hunt Leviathan, only at the end of time, and only with divine assistance (*TB Bava Batra* 74b–75a). In the meantime, God takes him out to play with him every day, implying that God has a domesticating relationship with Leviathan (*TB Avodah Zarah* 3b).
60. The animal's body could be used for other purposes however, like fur for clothing, even if it was not slaughtered correctly. A wild animal's hide can be turned into parchment or *klaf* for writing a Torah scroll, and the hide may be obtained as a by-product of hunting (generally by non-Jews). In fact, deerskin Torahs were once common. Nevertheless, according to many scribes, it is forbidden to kill an animal for the sole purpose of obtaining *klaf* (Kevin Hale, personal correspondence, March 29, 2017). I am indebted to Kevin Hale and Linda Motzkin for my knowledge on this subject.

61. *Tanchuma*, Noah 10.
62. Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, 139–42.
63. *Pirkei D'Rabi Eiezer*, chap. 11.
64. *TB Chullin* 7a–b; *Pesikta Rabbati* 14; see "Animals as teachers, exemplars, and moral agents" in Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, 152–55.
65. *Genesis Rabbah* 33:3; *TB Bava Metzia* 85a; Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, 146. A recent effort to save an individual calf in Israel that is reminiscent of this story has led to an international vegan protest movement. See the website of the 269 movement, http://www.269life.com (accessed June 7, 2017).
66. Nahum N. Glatzer, "The Concept of Sacrifice in Post-Biblical Judaism," in *Essays in Jewish Thought* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1976), 48–57.
67. *TB Pesachim* 49b. This statement appears in a section full of detractions against peasants (*am ha-aretz*). Although it suggests ordinary people should not eat meat, it also implies that people at higher spiritual levels should.
68. Traditional *halakha* places no limitations on the sourcing of these animals. As a result, a modern practice has evolved to use skins of fetal animals for Torah parchment because they are malleable and smooth. Such skins are readily available because pregnant animals are slaughtered worldwide in concentrated animal feeding operations; most of these animals' mothers would have died under awful conditions. See Shoshana Gugenheim, "Ethical Parchment Making," http://www.shoshanagugenheim.com/ethical-parchment-making (accessed March 27, 2017).
69. Commentary to Genesis 1:26, trans. Jeremy Cohen, part in *"Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 184–85, and part in "On Classical Judaism and Environmental Crisis," *Judaism and Environmental Ethics*, ed. Martin Yaffe (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 76–77. Contrary to other commentators, Saadyah also believed that humans were only temporarily banned from eating animals in Eden, until there would be enough of a population to cull from. See "*Be Fertile and Increase*," 187.
70. *Hanivchar b'Emunot v'Dei`ot* (*Emunot v'Dei`ot*), trans. Yosef Kafich (Jerusalem: Makhon Sura, 1970), art. 4, introduction.
71. Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 3:12, 442.
72. Ibid., 3:13, 448, 452; also *Moreh N'vukhim*, trans. Yosef Kafich (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1977), 298 and 300–301. Maimonides's rejection of anthropocentrism was also a rejection of his position in earlier works. See, for example, *Mishnah `im Peyrush Harambam*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1963), *Hakdamah*, 21–2.
73. *Guide for the Perplexed*, 3:25, 504.

74. Ibid., 3:48 and 599.
75. Ibid., 600.
76. Ibid., 3:13, 452–53.
77. Ibid., 1:54, 124.
78. David Sears, *The Vision of Eden: Animal Welfare and Vegetarianism in Jewish Law and Mysticism* (CreateSpace, 2015), 95–98. Both wrote after the advent of Kabbalah and were inflected by it.
79. Genesis 4:4–8.
80. *Sefer ha-Ikkarim*, 3:15, http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/mahshevt/ikarim/c6-2.htm#3 (accessed March 28, 2017).
81. *Akeidat Yitzhak* (Lemberg/Lvov), 1868, Gate 41, 79b; quoted at length in Sears, *Vision of Eden*, 98. This ideal of ethical purity, which can also permeate modern veganism, can be strongly in tension with affirming or living closer to nature.
82. *Sefer Chasidim According to the Parma Manuscript*, ed. Yehudah Wistinetzki (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1891), §1078–1080.
83. *Sefer Chasidim*, §1082, cf. §305. For other examples of this sensitivity see Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, 146.
84. *Sefer Bahir*, ed. Reuven Margaliot (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1994), §82, 168, 172.
85. *Bahir* §22, 119.
86. Ibid., §195. *Tikkunei Zohar* (published in the same volume cited for *Sefer Bahir*), §70, 133a, is a relatively early example from the fourteenth century that speaks about human reincarnation into animals.
87. Commentary to Genesis 1:29.
88. Ibid.
89. Commentary to Genesis 2:19.
90. Commentary to Deuteronomy 22:6–7.
91. One could say that here, too, Ramban is more worried about the impact on a human soul rather than the impact on other species, given that extinction was not imagined to be possible.
92. Moshe Cordovero, *Tomer D'vorah* (Jerusalem: Or Yikar, 1969), 19–20; Moshe Cordovero, *The Palm Tree of Deborah*, trans. Louis Jacobs (New York: Sepher Hermon, 1974), 78, 83ff. Compare with *Tomer D'vorah*, 16; *The Palm Tree of Deborah*, 71.
93. *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 9:3 and *TB Sanhedrin* 45a, 52b, *Pesachim* 75a, and *Ketubot* 37b.
94. David Mevorach Seidenberg, "Building the Body of the Shekhinah: Re-enchantment and Redemption of the Natural World in Hasidic Thought," in *A New Hasidism: Branches*, ed. Arthur Green and Ariel Evan Mayse (Philadelphia:

Jewish Publication Society, forthcoming). The cosmology behind this view is that the first divine Creation shattered, and the second Creation, the one we inhabit, exists to reach out to the broken pieces and reintegrate the sparks of divinity they contain. Because of the importance and difficulty of this task, many Kabbalists taught that only one trained in Kabbalah should eat meat (Sears, *Vision of Eden*, 172).

95. Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye, *Ben Porat Yosef* (Pieterkov, Poland: Feivel Belchatovski, 1884), 74a.

96. See sources in Sears, *Vision of Eden*, 196–218.

97. More extremely, in the case of *shiluach ha-kein*, some Kabbalists saw a way to instrumentalize a covenantal connection between God and the mother bird. They understood that the purpose of chasing away the mother was to cause the bird anguish and thereby arouse God's anguish over Israel's exile. See Natan Slifkin, "Shiluach haKein: The Transformation of a Mitzvah" (Jerusalem, 2010), https://www.zootorah.com/RationalistJudaism/ShiluachHaKein.pdf (accessed September 2013), 17–18.

98. Abraham Isaac Kook, *Chazon Hatzimchonut v'Hashalom*, ed. David Cohen (Jerusalem: Nezer David, 1983), 23, online at https://he.wikisource.org/wiki/חזון_הצמחונות_והשלום; and *A Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace*, trans. Jonathan Rubenstein, 15, online at http://jewishveg.com/AVisionofVegetarianismandPeace.pdf (both accessed June 4, 2017). Some of his contemporaries interpreted *kisui ha-dam* instead as a kind of burial of the animal's soul. See Seidenberg, *Kabbalah and Ecology*, 147.

99. *Chazon Hatzimchonut*, 15, §8 (translation adapted).

100. Ibid., 21–2, §11 (adapted).

101. Abraham Isaac Kook, *Abraham Isaac Kook: The Lights of Penitence, the Moral Principles, Lights of Holiness, Essays, Letters, and Poems*, trans. Ben Zion Bokser (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 221, or in Hebrew, Abraham Isaac Kook, *Orot Haqodesh*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Ha-agudah L'hotza'at Sifrei Hare'yah Kuk, 1937), vol. 2, 555.

102. Judging from PETA's 2003 "Holocaust on Your Plate" campaign, I do not think we can fault Kook for taking this position.

103. Rendsburg, "The Vegetarian Ideal," 320–23.

104. Both creation stories describe a vegan world (Rendsburg, "The Vegetarian Ideal," 321). However, they differ radically in how they have been applied to these issues.

105. Paul Shepard, *The Others: How Animals Made Us Human* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1997), 4–5.

106. Even Jainism, which may present a premodern parallel to abolitionist veganism, allows using animals for dairy products (milking only after the calf has

nursed) and for plowing, though some Jainist sects discourage agriculture because of its inherent violence to plants and small animals.

107. Rabbi David Rosen makes this argument in "Is Any Meat Today Kosher?," in *Times of Israel*, March 16, 2017, http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/is-any-meat-today-kosher.

108. This would include larger operations like Kol Foods and Grow and Behold. Whether such a system would be accepted by vegans is another question. A protest at Urban Adamah's 2017 Purim party against the slaughter of chickens that are past egg laying—under the strictest humane conditions—highlighted this tension in the Jewish environmental community. Naomi Davis explicates the vegan perspective in "Why I Will Keep Protesting for Animal Rights at Urban Adamah", in *J.*, March 20, 2017, http://www.jweekly.com/2017/03/20/why-i-will-keep-protesting-for-animal-rights-at-urban-adamah.

109. A purist "vegan" alternative would be to run farm equipment on diesel engines fueled by vegetable oil. Neither ethical system can make good sense of indigenous hunting cultures, which can be sustainable and deeply respectful toward the animals they depend on, but covenantalism can be modified to fit such cultures.