

**Rabbi:** Our teachers have written: “Not thine is the earth, but thou belongest to the earth, to respect it as Divine soil and to deem every one of its creatures a creature of God, thy fellow-being... [Consider] the things around you. I lent them to you for wise use only; never forget that I lent them to you. As soon as you use them unwisely, be it the greatest or the smallest, you commit treachery against My world, you commit murder and robbery against My property, you sin against Me!” This is what God calls unto you...” [Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany; Fourth Letter of Ben Uziel, and Horeb 56]

**All:** And so we affirm that we belong to the earth and that we will respect it. We will treat every creature of God as a fellow being. We promise not to neglect or harm them. Rather we promise to protect not only those animals with whom we live, who we love, but also all creatures near and far.

**Rabbi:** In the end of days all will know that we have been brought into the world to heal and not destroy.

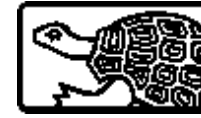
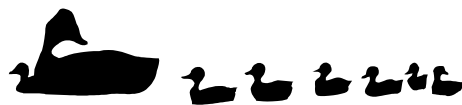
**All:** Through our deeds – now - may we bring that day near when no creature will be afraid and every being shall live in peace, as the prophet Isaiah foretold:

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 fatling together;  
and a little child shall lead them.  
And the cow and the bear shall feed  
and their young ones shall lie down together...

**Rabbi:** And God said: “Behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you...”

**All:** May we always uphold the covenant.

*Keyn Y’hi Ratzon.* May this be God’s will.



Congregation Har HaShem’s

## *“Keeping the Covenant: The Celebration of the Animals”*



**“Behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you, and with every living creature that is with you, of the birds, of the cattle, and of every wild animal of the earth with you...” [Genesis 9:8-10]**

**Rabbi:** We have come here today to offer our thanks to God who created all things. We join in this service of celebration, with love for our animals who we refer to as our pets and our friends. In deep appreciation for God's goodness, in awe and in wonder, we link ourselves with every one of God's creatures in praise of God's holy name:

**All:** Halleluyah! Praise Adonai from the heavens  
Praise God from on high.

Praise Adonai, O you who are on earth –  
all sea monsters and ocean depths,  
all wild and tamed beasts,  
creeping things and winged birds,  
all rulers and peoples of the earth,  
old and young together.

Let them praise the name of Adonai  
for God's name, God alone, is sublime.  
God's splendor covers heaven and earth.

[from Psalm 148]

**Rabbi:** Moses, servant of God, and David, king of Israel, treated the animals in their care with acts of loving-kindness.

**Reader:** "Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. An angel of the Eternal One appeared to him in a blazing fire out of the bush." [Exodus 3:1]

**Rabbi:** About these words our rabbis taught:

**All:** A lamb once wandered away from the flock and soon was lost. It wandered weary in search of water. When Moses realized that the lamb was lost he followed after until he found it drinking at a small spring. Moses said, "I didn't know you were thirsty; you must be tired. And he cradled the lamb close to his heart and carried it back to the flock.

And God said: "You who tend the sheep with such mercy will be a compassionate leader for My sheep, the people of Israel. [Exodus Rabba]

**Reader:** Only then did the angel of the Eternal One appear to Moses out of the burning bush.

**Reader:** David was tested as a shepherd and passed the trial. He used to protect the small sheep from the attacks of the larger ones and would make sure that each animal received the food best suited for it. First he gave the little lambs the tenderest grass, then he fed the old sheep good, soft grass while he let the strong young sheep chew the tough stalks.

**All:** Said God, "The man who exerts himself to take care of each sheep's individual needs will certainly care for My people." Only then did God designate David as Israel's future king.

**Reader:** "You need only ask the beasts and they will teach you, the birds of the sky and they will tell you. Or speak with the earth and it will inform you, and the fish of the sea will tell you stories. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Eternal has done this? [Job 12:7-9]

**Rabbi:** Each of us here has special stories about our animals and stories about our relationships with these animals that provide us with insights into the nature of goodness and our fundamental responsibilities toward others.

Let's take some time now to share some of these special stories.

~ **Stories** ~

**Rabbi:** In gratitude to the One who formed us along with all living beings we say this blessing together:

**All:** *Baruch Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam, Oseh Ma'asei V'reishit.*  
Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe Source of all Creation.

**Rabbi:** The one who sees fine creations – people or animals or trees – stops and says:

**All:** *Baruch Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam She'kacha Lo B'olamo.*  
Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe who has placed  
such beauty in the world.

