



## ADAM'S ANIMALS

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Here in the Garden of Eden, Adam has a big job: God has asked him to name all the animals from A to Z! Some of them you've heard of... and some may be new to you.

### JEWISH CONCEPTS

In the Garden of Eden, Adam walks and talks with his friends, the animals. When Adam gives names to all the creatures, he shows them respect by offering time and attention to each one.

Adam's actions are a good example of *kavod habriyot*, respect for all living things. In Jewish tradition, treating all people with dignity is regarded as a way to pay respect to God. Jewish writings often extend this respect to the rest of creation. Rabbinic commentary tells a story of God leading Adam through the Garden of Eden to share its beauties. God tells Adam: "do not spoil or destroy my world, for if you do there will be no one after you to repair it." The 13th-century sage Ramban wrote in his Torah commentary that while we may kill individual animals for food, we are not permitted to destroy a species. Another rabbinic commentary tells us that even creatures that seem superfluous to us, such as fleas, gnats, and flies, were included in creation for a purpose and have inherent worth.

We can all be stewards of the earth in big and small ways, from advocating for environmental protections to treating the individual people and animals in our lives with respect and kindness.

### USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Here are some book-related activities you can do as a family:

- Identify an animal in this book whose name you've never heard. Look it up on the Internet or in an encyclopedia, or borrow a library book about it, and share what you learn with others.
- Watch a nature documentary on the National Geographic website, on YouTube, or on DVDs borrowed from your local library.
- Consider giving any amount, large or small, to a group that works to protect animals and their habitats.
- Visit a wildlife shelter or hospital to meet the native animals of your region. You might ask the staff if they need items such as old towels, baby gates, or bowls for food. If so, you could donate your own or encourage your friends and relatives to have a donation drive.
- Create a backyard habitat for birds, butterflies, and small animals by providing food plants, water, cover, and places to raise young. You can even get your garden certified by the National Wildlife Federation!