



CHAMELEON THAT SAVED NOAH'S ARK

Written by Yael Molchadsky

Illustrated by Orit Bergman

Noah's Ark didn't just hold animals – it held food for all those animals to eat. But the chameleons were very picky eaters! No one could have guessed how this problem would be solved.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

All living things have a role to play in sustaining existence, and all must be cared for and respected. On the ark, Noah and his family put into practice this deep understanding of the importance of biological diversity.

Although we may not know the specific ways that each is crucial, we can take personal action to keep all living plants and animals from extinction, and thereby preserve the rich diversity of life.

The Chameleon that Saved Noah's Ark embodies an ancient interpretation of the biblical book of Genesis. More than 1600 years ago, Rabbi Yehudah noted, “Everything that God created in the world has a purpose. Even things that a person may consider to be unnecessary have their place in creation.” (*Bereshit Rabbah*, 10:8).

What could seem more “unnecessary” than an alien-looking lizard with bulging eyes and an appetite for worms? In celebrating these unusual creatures—as well as the creeping crawling things they like to eat—this story addresses a profound truth about variety in the natural world. It also brings to life a popular idiom that has been expressed in proverbs, songs, and novels:

It takes all kinds to make a world!

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

When worms are discovered in the pomegranates, there's almost a crisis on the ark! But for humans, getting inside this juicy red fruit can be tasty and fun. Here's one way in:

- Place a clean kitchen towel under the pomegranate before cutting it open. Use a sharp knife to cut the fruit in half vertically, from stem end to flower end.
- Fill a large bowl halfway with water, and place one half pomegranate in the water. An adult may need to peel off the leathery skin, but even the smallest of hands can massage the fruit and separate the seeds (“arils”) from the white fleshy parts (“albedo”).
- After the seeds sink to the bottom of the bowl, pick out and discard the floating parts. Drain the water from the bowl and you'll be left with a generous pile of glistening red seeds. Enjoy them as a snack, or add to any recipe that calls for dried cranberries. The crunchy seeds are delicious tossed in a salad or mixed into whipped cream.

Pomegranates are one of the most ancient of fruits. They are referred to in the Biblical *Song of Songs* and the story of the Exodus, and are a traditional representation of Rosh Hashanah. Some people think that the “apple” in the Garden of Eden was actually a pomegranate!