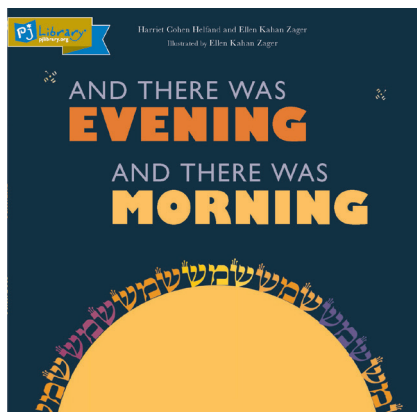


## BIG QUESTION

# How does loving all creation lead to peace?



### *And There Was Evening And There Was Morning*

Written by Harriet Cohen Helfand  
and Ellen Kahan Zager  
Illustrated by Ellen Kahan Zager  
Published by Kar-Ben Publishing



Love of all creation - *A-ha-vat ha-bri-yot*

אַהַבַּת הַבְּרִיּוֹת



## Read

the book for Jewish values

### How does this book reflect the theme of pursuing peace?

*And There Was Evening And There Was Morning* uses beautiful poetry and glorious illustrations to help the reader explore God's work of Creation. This story sets the tone for understanding that the world and its contents are a gift for everyone to share, and that peace can be brought about in part through the **respect and love of all of God's creations.**

#### Three aspects of this value to consider:

- God gave us a beautiful and peaceful world to maintain.
- There is a difference between things created by God and things created by people.
- We have a responsibility to take care of one another, as we are all God's creations.

The term *ahavat habriyot* refers to respecting and loving all of creation. The biblical account of Creation describes God as carefully planning every element, announcing "it was good" at the end of each day. A young Adam is told to "work and guard" the Earth (Genesis 2:15). The Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of the 18th century Hasidic movement, adds, "Human beings must cherish the world... all of creation, was pervaded with dignity and purpose." The rabbis interpret these instructions as viewing the world with wonder and appreciation, safeguarding the world's resources, and attempting each day to maintain the beauty and sense of peace that permeated the first days of Creation.

#### Storytelling techniques

1. Encourage students to try body sculpture to represent each day's creations. How can they use their arms, legs, and facial expressions, individually or in groups, to create celestial bodies, water, or animals?
2. Direct attention to the illustrations - all of God's creations come from the manipulation of the letters in the object's or animal's name. Play a game of "Where's the Letter?" For example, how many of the Hebrew letter mem [מ] can they find on the page describing *mayim*, water? Students with more advanced reading skills might search for whole words.

**Many of the objects and animals in this book are drawn using Hebrew letters. Use the glossary in the back for reference.**



## Discuss

Jewish values with one another

### After you read

- What does peace mean to you? What other words mean something similar to peace? What words are the opposite of peace?
- What makes you feel peaceful? What can we do to make our classroom feel peaceful?
- God created an awe-inspiring world. What are some of the creations in this book you feel strongly about? How does loving God's creations lead to peace?
- What keeps us from having peace in the world or peace with God's creations? What can we do to overcome obstacles to peace?



## Imagine

how values will come to life

### Alphabet beasts

The unusual art in this book features God's creations formed from the letters that spell their names. Challenge your students to create creatures of their own using a letter from either the word shalom (ש ל ו מ) or olam (ע ו ל מ). Ask your students to note the similar letters found in both words and discuss the connections between shalom (peace) and olam (the world).

Provide clay or dough plus materials such as pipe cleaners, beads, items from nature, buttons, and anything else you might have on hand. Encourage students to stretch and shape their dough letters to achieve the right look for their creatures.

### Prayer for peace

In this book, the fourth day is described as a "peaceful day." Reread the book and discuss the descriptive words used (watery, noisy, holy, etc.). Divide students into small groups, one for each day of Creation, including Shabbat. Have them write a sentence using that one descriptive word in a statement or wish for peace. Add the sentences together to create a classroom prayer for peace to use on Shabbat and every day.



## Engage

families in conversations about values



Work with your students to host a Creation celebration. Brainstorm appropriate snacks for each day, such as star fruit for Day 4 or broccoli for Day 3. (Ask students how a bracha, or blessing for food, relates to the value of *ahavat habriyot*.)

During your event divide the families into seven groups as in the prayer activity. (This is the perfect occasion to share your class prayer.) Families can design a poster of their day which includes ways to protect and preserve its creations and creatures. Hopefully families will be motivated to act on their ideas.



### More on this topic

#### PJ Library books

*Light* by Jane Breskin Zalben

*Just a Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg