

The Sacred Table: Creating a Jewish Food Ethic

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Section One: Study Tracks

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Section One: Study Tracks

Track	Title	Audience	Description
1	<i>B'kiut</i>	Any reader; class about food and Judaism	An overview of the issues and ideas that inform the decisions that Reform Jews make about food. The track includes chapters that provide basic information about each major topic in the book as well as personal stories that illustrate in touching ways how these ideas play out in our lives.
2	Ritual Kashrut	Any reader; class about Reform Judaism and kashrut	These chapters include basic information about the traditional laws of kashrut, the history of kashrut in the Reform Movement, the current discussion of kashrut in the Reform Movement, and guidelines for both communal and personal decision making regarding dietary standards.
3	Environment	Any reader; class about food and the environment	This track takes both a wide-angle view of the general ethic of <i>bal tashchit</i> , refraining from wasteful destruction, and a zoomed-in view of specific topics of concern from an environmental perspective. The track also offers the reader or student concrete suggestions for choosing a more eco-friendly diet.
4	Social Justice	Any reader; class about food and social justice	These chapters span the topics of the fair treatment of workers involved in food production, the economic issues of food costs and quality, and the ethical concerns of kashrut.
5	Making Reform Choices	Any reader; class about Reform thought and practice	This track uses the topic of dietary choice as a model to study the Reform decision-making process. The chapters cover the history of the Reform approach to kashrut as well as the current discussion of what constitutes “Reform kashrut.” The track also includes chapters on how to go about creating a personal or communal version of kashrut under the principles of Reform Judaism. This track can be supplemented with general information from external sources about Reform ideology.

6	An Ethical Pesach	Any reader; pre-Pesach class	Pesach is a festival whose message is about freedom from oppression. This track focuses on ensuring that the preparation for Pesach and the food and wine served at the seder are congruent with the meaning of the holiday.
7	Food and Spirituality	Any reader; class on food and spirituality	This track examines the spiritual dimension of food, including eating, food preparation, and gardening as opportunities for spiritual exploration and growth.
8	For Teens	Post- <i>b'nei mitzvah</i> class; individual units can be used for youth programming	Teens will have an opportunity to learn more about where their food comes from and how to make choices based on the teachings of Reform Judaism regarding values such as <i>bal tashchit</i> , <i>tzedek</i> , and <i>sh'mirat haguf</i> .
9	For College Students	Hillel class or class at a local synagogue aimed at college students; individual units can be used for one-time programs	Students will learn about contemporary issues related to food. They will have the opportunity to learn about the Reform perspective on these issues and consider how they might apply what they learn in terms of information and decision making to their own food choices.
10	Book Club	Book club	The book-club track focuses on articles that provide background information about food ethics as well as pieces that provide food for reflection, sharing, and discussion.
11	Interfaith Action	Synagogue group in dialogue with a group from a local church, mosque, or faith group	This track can be used to facilitate a program of interfaith dialogue that leads to action regarding the cause of food justice. The articles highlighted in this track should be supplemented with articles provided by the other faith groups so that all parties can discuss their faiths' perspective on food and food justice.

Track One: B'kiut

Introduction	<p>Introduction: A Buffet of Educated Choices</p> <p>Voices: Small Bites</p> <p>Chapter 9: Real Life / Real Food: A Holy Moment at McDonald's</p>
Kashrut	<p>Chapter 10: An Overview of Ritual Kashrut</p> <p>Chapter 1: Making Every Forkful Count: Reform Jews, Kashrut, and Mindful Eating, 1840–2010</p> <p>Chapter 12: Real Life / Real Food: Kashrut—A Family History</p>
Environment	<p>Chapter 13: Curb Your Consumerism: Developing a <i>Bal Tashchit</i> Food Ethic for Today</p> <p>Chapter 18: Real Life / Real Food: Let Your Table Be to You a Temple</p>
Animals	<p>Chapter 19: Kindness to Animals: <i>Tzaar Baalei Chayim</i></p> <p>Chapter 24: Real Life / Real Food: A Letter to My Vegetarian Husband</p>
Workers	<p>Chapter 25: <i>Oshek</i>: The Meeting Point of Ritual Piety and Moral Purity in a Contemporary Reform Kashrut</p> <p>Chapter 28: Real Life / Real Food: Post-Postville and Onward</p>
<i>Hechsher</i>	<p>Chapter 29: Considering <i>Hechsher</i></p> <p>Chapter 33: Real Life / Real Food: <i>Kiddush</i> and Mad Dog 20-20—A Kosher Combination?</p>
Health	<p>Chapter 34: Palates, Pilates, Politics: A Prophetic Vision for Eating</p> <p>Chapter 37: Real Life / Real Food: Redefining Healthy Eating, For Life</p>
Justice	<p>Chapter 38: Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat: Food Ethics, <i>Tzedakah</i>, and How We Celebrate</p> <p>Chapter 41: Real Life / Real Food: Bread, Torah, and <i>Tikkun</i></p>
Spirituality	<p>Chapter 42: Food Preparation as a Holy Act: <i>Hafrashat Challah</i></p> <p>Chapter 47: Real Life / Real Food: An Introduction to Hunger</p>
Making Choices	<p>Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: <i>Sh'leimut</i> and <i>Sh'lom Bayit</i></p> <p>Chapter 50: Real Life / Real Food: Kosher Christmas Dinner</p>

Track Two: Kashrut

Fundamentals of Kashrut	Chapter 10: An Overview of Ritual Kashrut (Relevant biblical or Rabbinic texts)
History of Reform Kashrut	Chapter 1: Making Every Forkful Count: Reform Jews, Kashrut, and Mindful Eating, 1840–2010 Chapter 2: The Myth of the <i>T'reifah</i> Banquet: American Culinary Culture and the Radicalization of Food Policy in American Reform Judaism Chapter 12: Real Life/Real Food: Kashrut—A Family History
Current Approach	Chapter 4: Adventures in Eating: An Emerging Model for Kashrut Chapter 8: Is Dietary Practice Now in the Reform Mainstream? A Survey of Attendees at the 2005 Houston Biennial Voices: Small Bites: p. xxxi, Dr. Dev Smith; p. xxxii, Rabbi Dan Pernick, Joe Eglash; p. xxxiii, Rabbi Morley T. Feinstein; p. xxxiv, Rabbi Burt E. Schuman, Rabbi Ellen Flax; p. xxxv, Rabbi Joel N. Abraham; pp. xxxv–xxxvi, Rabbi Brian Zimmerman; p. xxxvi, Jane E. Herman, Rabbi Owen Gottlieb; pp. xxxvi–xxxvii, Rabbi Leah R. Berkowitz; p. xxxvii, Jenni Person; p. xxxix, Kevin Moss, Raziell Haimi-Cohen; p. xl, Rabbi Laurie Katz Braun; p. xli, Marci Wiseman; p. xlii, Rabbi Barry H. D. Block, Rabbi Pamela Wax
Making Choices	Chapter 29: Considering <i>Hechsher</i> Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: <i>Sh'leimut</i> and <i>Sh'lom Bayit</i> Chapter 49: Creating a Reform Communal Dietary Policy

Suggested Activities

- Discuss “Voices: Small Bites,” and give students the opportunity to write and share their own.
- Class potluck meal
- Visit a kosher butcher.
- Visit a grocery store to identify kosher products, perhaps in preparation for the class meal.

Track Three: Environment

<i>Bal Tashchit</i>	<p>Chapter 13: Curb Your Consumerism: Developing a <i>Bal Tashchit</i> Food Ethic for Today</p> <p>Voices: Small Bites: pp. xxxii–xxxiii, Sarah Kroloff Segal; p. xxxv, Rabbi Allen S. Maller</p>
Current Issues	<p>Chapter 16: Fish: A Complex Issue</p> <p>Chapter 15: On High-Tech Science and Our Food: Three Questions</p> <p>Chapter 18: Real Life / Real Food: Let Your Table Be to You a Temple</p>
Taking Action	<p>Chapter 14: Connecting Locally: Jumping Off the Production Line</p> <p>Chapter 17: Getting Back to the Garden</p>
Making Choices	<p>Chapter 1: Making Every Forkful Count: Reform Jews, Kashrut, and Mindful Eating, 1840–2010,</p> <p>Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: <i>Sh'leimut</i> and <i>Sh'lom Bayit</i></p> <p>Chapter 49: Creating a Reform Communal Dietary Policy</p>

Suggested Activities

- Conduct a *bal tashchit* audit of the synagogue, focusing especially on food served at *Onegs* and community meals.
- Create a synagogue garden (see [“A Guide to Synagogue Gardens”](#)).
- Visit a local farm and discuss their approach to the environment and eliminating wastefulness.
- Class potluck meal featuring food that represents a concern for *bal tashchit*

Track Four: Social Justice

<p><i>Oshek</i>—Labor Justice</p>	<p>Chapter 25: <i>Oshek</i>: The Meeting Point of Ritual Piety and Moral Purity in a Contemporary Reform Kashrut</p> <p>Chapter 26: Our Dark Addictions: Chocolate, Coffee, and Tea</p>
<p>Economic Justice</p>	<p>Chapter 40: Raising Our Voices for Food Justice</p> <p>Chapter 38: Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat: Food Ethics, <i>Tzedakah</i>, and How We Celebrate</p> <p>Chapter 41: Real Life / Real Food: Bread, Torah, and <i>Tikkun</i></p>
<p>Kashrut and Justice</p>	<p>Chapter 30: We Answer to an Even Higher Authority</p> <p>Chapter 39: Pricing Ourselves Out of the Market: Is Eating Kosher (Ritually and Ethically) a Privilege of the Rich?</p> <p>Chapter 33: Real Life / Real Food: <i>Kiddush</i> and Mad Dog 20-20—A Kosher Combination?</p>
<p>Making Choices</p>	<p>Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: <i>Sh'leimut</i> and <i>Sh'lom Bayit</i></p> <p>Chapter 49: Creating a Reform Communal Dietary Policy</p> <p>Voices: Small Bites: pp. xxxiii–xxxiv, Jerry Schwartz; p. xxxvi, Jane E. Herman</p>

Suggested Activities

- Invite a local politician or activist to come to discuss food policy and action items.
- Take a driving or walking tour of a town that qualifies as a “food desert” to compare prices and selection with an area that has abundant healthy, quality, affordable food.
- Visit a supermarket with an abundant selection of fair trade products; students can stock up and have a class meal or snack.
- Volunteer as a class at a local soup kitchen or sponsoring a food drive.

Track Five: Making Reform Choices

Introduction	(Outside text about Reform history and approach to decision making, platforms—for example, http://ccarnet.org/documentsandpositions/platforms)
History and Reform Considerations about Kashrut	<p>Chapter 1: Making Every Forkful Count: Reform Jews, Kashrut, and Mindful Eating, 1840–2010</p> <p>Chapter 7: Kashrut and Autonomy</p> <p>Responsa that illustrate Reform decision making in action regarding kashrut (select from the list on pp. 495–96; we suggest “Kashrut in Reform Judaism,” “Pesach Kashrut and Reform Judaism,” and “A Fish in the Shape of a Shrimp”)</p>
Reform Perspectives	<p>Chapter 6: On Kashrut</p> <p>Chapter 5: Kashrut: A New Freedom for Reform Jews</p> <p>Chapter 31: But Is the <i>Mashgichah</i> Kosher?</p>
Making Choices	<p>Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: <i>Sh'leimut</i> and <i>Sh'lom Bayit</i></p> <p>Chapter 49: Creating a Reform Communal Dietary Policy</p> <p>Voices: Small Bites: p. xxxii, Rabbi Dan Pernick; p. xxxv, Rabbi Joel N. Abraham; pp. xxxvi–xxxvii, Rabbi Leah R. Berkowitz; p. xxxvii, Jenni Person; p. xxxix, Kevin Moss; p. xl, Rabbi Laurie Katz Braun, Chaim Lieberman;</p>

Suggested Activities

- Begin the course with a history of general Reform Jewish decision making.
- Invite the rabbi or a lay leader to discuss the evolution of the synagogue’s dietary policy. Make connections between this history and the Reform approach.
- Project: students work as individuals or in small groups to trace the history of Reform decision making for a topic of their choice and present their findings to the class.

Track Six: An Ethical Pesach

Handling <i>Chameitz</i>	Chapter 11: Passover Kashrut: A Reform Approach
Once We Were Slaves, Now We Are Free	Chapter 25: <i>Oshet</i> : The Meeting Point of Ritual Piety and Moral Purity in a Contemporary Reform Kashrut Chapter 27: A Look Back at the Reform Movement's Response to the United Farm Workers Grape Boycott
What's for Dinner?	Chapter 22: Meat Minimalism: Were We Meant to Be Ethical Omnivores? Chapter 14: Connecting Locally: Jumping Off the Production Line Chapter 32: Wine: Our Symbol of Joy
Integrating Values into the Seder	(Project presentation or model seder)

Suggested Activities

- A model seder where each student prepares ahead of time a teaching that connects what he/she has learned to the rituals of the seder and leads that part of the seder. The teacher can compile all of the teachings into a packet that the students can use as a companion to their Haggadot at their own seders.
- Visit a grocery store to look for items that meet the ritual and ethical standards of Pesach kashrut that the members of the class are planning to adhere to.
- The class can help get the synagogue ready for Pesach.
- A Pesach cooking class with local, organic ingredients, including vegetarian recipes

Track Seven: Food and Spirituality

Setting the Table	Voices: Small Bites: p. xxxi, Dr. Dev Smith; p. xxxii, Mindy Knapp; p. xxxv, Rabbi Allen S. Maller; p. xxxvii, Stephen H. Olson; p. xxxviii, Rabbi Louis Rieser; p. xxxix, Rabbi Amy Schwartzman; pp. xxxix–xl, Tina Wasserman; p. xlii, Rabbi Annie Belford; p. xliii, Rabbi Andy Gordon
In the Kitchen	Chapter 17: Getting Back to the Garden Chapter 42: Food Preparation as a Holy Act: <i>Hafrashat Challah</i>
At the table	Chapter 43: The Joy and Privilege of Blessings Before and After a Meal Chapter 9: Real Life / Real Food: A Holy Moment at McDonald's
Food, Spirituality, and Us	Chapter 45: What I Eat Is Who I Am: Kashrut and Identity Chapter 44: We Eat First: A Congregational Snapshot Chapter 46: <i>Tzom</i> : Fasting as a Religious/Spiritual Practice

Suggested Activities

- Bake challah as a class, demonstrating different recipes and braiding techniques, tithing.
- Sell the challah and donate the proceeds to *tzedakah*.
- Create a class cookbook based on recipes contributed by the class that have spiritual significance for the contributor.
- Spiritual potluck, where each participant in the class brings a dish and a story, teaching, meditation, or song to share
- In-class meal or snacks to provide the opportunity to learn the blessings before and after eating

Track Eight: For Teens

Introduction: Expressing a Personal Connection to Food	Voices: Small Bites Chapter 9: Real Life / Real Food: A Holy Moment at McDonald's
Kashrut Basics	Chapter 10: An Overview of Ritual Kashrut Chapter 30: We Answer to an Even Higher Authority
Eating Meat	Chapter 19: Kindness to Animals: <i>Tzaar Baalei Chayim</i> Chapter 23: Blood, Sweat, and Tears: The Making of a Reform <i>Shochet</i>
<i>Bal Tashchit</i>	Chapter 13: Curb Your Consumerism: Developing a <i>Bal Tashchit</i> Food Ethic for Today Chapter 15: On High-Tech Science and Our Food: Three Questions
<i>Oshek</i>	Chapter 25: <i>Oshek</i> : The Meeting Point of Ritual Piety and Moral Purity in a Contemporary Reform Kashrut Chapter 26: Our Dark Addictions: Chocolate, Coffee, and Tea
<i>Tzedek</i>	Chapter 38: Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat: Food Ethics, <i>Tzedakah</i> , and How We Celebrate Chapter 40: Raising Our Voices for Food Justice Chapter 47: Real Life / Real Food: An Introduction to Hunger
<i>Sh'mirat HaGuf</i>	Chapter 36: Returning Food to Its Rightful Place: Eating Disorders in the Jewish Community Chapter 37: Real Life / Real Food: Redefining Healthy Eating
Spirituality	Chapter 43: The Joy and Privilege of Blessings Before and After a Meal Chapter 46: <i>Tzom</i> : Fasting as a Religious/Spiritual Practice
Identity	Chapter 45: What I Eat Is Who I Am: Kashrut and Identity Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: <i>Sh'leimut</i> and <i>Sh'lom Bayit</i>

Suggested Activities

- Students can read and discuss the “Voices: Small Bites” at the beginning of the book, and then deduce from them the major themes of concern regarding the creation of a Jewish food ethic.

- *Tzedek* projects: volunteer at a soup kitchen, food drive, bake sale.
- Field trips: visit a sustainable farm or farmers' market; scavenger hunt in a grocery store for kosher or sustainable products.
- Students can conduct an “audit” of their diet for concern for the environment, justice, health, kashrut, etc.
- Potluck meal with students and their families or trip to a restaurant that features organic, local foods

Track Nine: For College Students

Environment	Chapter 13: Curb Your Consumerism: Developing a <i>Bal Tashchit</i> Food Ethic for Today Chapter 14: Connecting Locally: Jumping Off the Production Line
Meat Consumption	Chapter 16: Fish: A Complex Issue Chapter 20: “I’ll Have What She’s Having”: Jewish Ethical Vegetarianism Chapter 22: Meat Minimalism: Were We Meant to Be Ethical Omnivores?
Drinking	Chapter 26: Our Dark Addictions: Chocolate, Coffee, and Tea Chapter 32: Wine: Our Symbol of Joy Chapter 33: Real Life / Real Food: <i>Kiddush</i> and Mad Dog 20-20—A Kosher Combination?
Kashrut	Chapter 1: Making Every Forkful Count: Reform Jews, Kashrut, and Mindful Eating, 1840–2010 Chapter 23: Blood, Sweat, and Tears: The Making of a Reform <i>Shochet</i> Chapter 30: We Answer to an Even Higher Authority
Justice	Chapter 25: <i>Oshek</i> : The Meeting Point of Ritual Piety and Moral Purity in Contemporary Reform Kashrut Chapter 38: Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat: Food Ethics, <i>Tzedakah</i> , and How We Celebrate Chapter 40: Raising Our Voices for Food Justice
Food and the Individual	Chapter 45: What I Eat Is Who I Am: Kashrut and Identity Chapter 46: <i>Tzom</i> : Fasting as a Religious/Spiritual Practice Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: <i>Sh’leimut</i> and <i>Sh’lom Bayit</i>
Food and the Community	Chapter 35: Of Pharisees and Allergies: <i>Shulchan Shalom</i> Chapter 44: We Eat First: A Congregational Snapshot Chapter 49: Creating a Reform Communal Dietary Policy

Suggested Activities

- Campaign at Hillel for an issue of food policy or food justice.
- Hillel-wide volunteer project at a local soup kitchen, or Hillel food drive
- Joint project with other faith groups on campus
- If the Hillel serves food, advocate for healthier, more organic, or local options.
- Create a Hillel garden.
- Potluck meal
- Guest lecture from a professor of environmental studies, public policy, Jewish studies, etc.
- Review the Hillel kashrut policy, evaluating in light of Reform ideas of kashrut.

Track Ten: Book Club

Part 1: Perspective: History and Trends of Jewish Dietary Practices within Reform Judaism	Chapter 1: Making Every Forkful Count: Reform Jews, Kashrut, and Mindful Eating, 1840–2010 Chapter 4: Adventures in Eating: An Emerging Model for Kashrut
Part 2: Buffet of Educated Choices: Jewish Ritual Law	Chapter 10: An Overview of Ritual Kashrut Chapter 12: Real Life / Real Food: Kashrut—A Family History
Part 3: Environmental Ethics: <i>Bal Tashchit</i>	Chapter 13: Curb Your Consumerism: Developing a <i>Bal Tashchit</i> Food Ethic for Today Chapter 16: Fish: A Complex Issue
Part 4: Kindness to Animals: <i>Tzaar Baalei Chayim</i>	Chapter 19: Kindness to Animals: <i>Tzaar Baalei Chayim</i> Chapter 23: Blood, Sweat, and Tears: The Making of a Reform <i>Shochet</i>
Part 5: Concern for Oppressed Workers: <i>Oshek</i>	Chapter 25: <i>Oshek</i> : The Meeting Point of Ritual Piety and Moral Purity in a Contemporary Reform Kashrut Chapter 26: Our Dark Addictions: Chocolate, Coffee, and Tea
Part 6: <i>Hechsher</i> : Who Decides What Is Kosher?	Chapter 29: Considering <i>Hechsher</i> Chapter 33: Real Life / Real Food: <i>Kiddush</i> and Mad Dog 20-20—A Kosher Combination?
Part 7: Guarding Our Health: <i>Sh'mirat HaGuf</i>	Chapter 34: Palates, Pilates, Politics: A Prophetic Vision for Eating Chapter 36: Returning Food to Its Rightful Place: Eating Disorders in the Jewish Community
Part 8: Justice: <i>Tzedek</i>	Chapter 38: Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat: Food Ethics, <i>Tzedakah</i> , and How We Celebrate Chapter 40: Raising Our Voices for Food Justice
Part 9: Spirituality	Chapter 42: Food Preparation as a Holy Act: <i>Hafrashat Challah</i> Chapter 46: <i>Tzom</i> : Fasting as a Religious/Spiritual Practice
Part 10: Making Your Choices: <i>Shalom</i>	Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: <i>Sh'leimut</i> and <i>Sh'lom Bayit</i> Chapter 50: Real Life / Real Food: Kosher Christmas Dinner

Track Eleven: Interfaith Action

The essays in this track should be supplemented with similar material provided by the partnering faith groups for mutual study and discussion.

Learning about Each Other's Customs	Chapter 3: Kashrut: A Reform Point of View
Food and Ritual	Chapter 46: <i>Tzom</i> : Fasting as a Religious/Spiritual Practice Chapter 43: The Joy and Privilege of Blessings Before and After a Meal
Food and Community	Chapter 44: We Eat First: A Congregational Snapshot Chapter 35: Of Pharisees and Allergies: <i>Shulchan Shalom</i>
Food Justice	Chapter 38: Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat: Food Ethics, <i>Tzedakah</i> , and How We Celebrate Chapter 40: Raising Our Voices for Food Justice Chapter 14: Connecting Locally: Jumping Off the Production Line

Suggested Activities

- Communal meal featuring teaching and experimentation with the eating rituals of the participating faith groups
- Attend a meal at the place of worship or gathering.
- Joint project of lobbying or organizing around food justice or sustainability
- Invite a local politician to speak about food justice or issues of sustainability.
- Joint participation in a CSA
- Create a community garden.

Section Two: Study Questions

Part 1—Perspective: History and Trends of Jewish Dietary Practices within Reform Judaism

Questions for Part 1

1. What are the major forces that have shaped Reform Jewish dietary practice and laws from 1840 to the present?
2. What unique questions do Reform Jews bring to the topic of kashrut?
3. On what aspects of kashrut do the authors of the chapters in this section agree? On what aspects do they disagree? Where do you stand?
4. How do the variety of opinions and views of kashrut constitute a “Reform approach” to this aspect of the Jewish tradition?

Chapter 1: Making Every Forkful Count: Reform Jews, Kashrut, and Mindful Eating, 1840–2010

1. Compare and contrast the “*t’reifah* banquet” and the “ham jam.” In what social context did each take place? To what degree was each event representative of the general dietary habits of the Reform leadership of the time and of the general population?
2. How has the definition of what is “kosher” changed throughout the history of Reform Judaism?
3. What characteristics of Reform kashrut are expressed through the *Gan Chiae* project?
4. Do you think that there should be different standards for public meals that are sponsored by Reform institutions or at Reform conventions than those that might be abided by in the Reform Jewish home?

Chapter 2: The Myth of the *T’reifah* Banquet: American Culinary Culture and the Radicalization of Food Policy in American Reform Judaism

1. What misconceptions about the *t’reifah* banquet does Sussman dispel? What new information does he reveal about the significance of the meal?
2. For a Reform Jew in the late nineteenth century, what might the difference have been between eating shellfish or pork? Why? What are some common distinctions that we make today regarding the laws of kashrut that contradict with the traditional prohibitions? On what basis do we make these distinctions?
3. To what extent are dietary practices a useful measure of religious observance and of ethnic identity? What are the shortcomings of applying diet as a litmus test to Reform Jews?
4. What values are expressed through the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform’s stance on kashrut (p. 40)? How have the values of the Reform Movement evolved since 1885? Where do you see kashrut heading in the Reform community?

Chapter 3: Kashrut: A Reform Point of View

1. What options does Maslin propose as forms of kashrut?
2. What reasons does Maslin provide for Reform Jews to consider observing some form of kashrut? How do you react to these reasons? Which do you find most or least compelling?
3. To what extent is it important for the Reform Movement to reach consensus about a reason for keeping kosher? What is the impact of a diversity of opinions among Reform Jews?

Chapter 4: Adventures in Eating: An Emerging Model

1. What was the theory of ritual that influenced the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform? How does Mikva redefine ritual for Reform Jews today?
2. How does Mikva employ each of the “five categories of purpose” to propose a new model for kashrut? What new standards of kashrut emerge from her application of ancient concerns to modern times?
3. What inspires you about this approach to kashrut? What examples do you have from your dietary choices that reflect these values or additional values of your own?

Chapter 5: Kashrut: A New Freedom for Reform Jew

1. Do you experience (or have you experienced in the past) any of the “reticence about embracing kashrut” to which Levy refers on page 68? Which factors from those that he lists are/were the source of your reticence? What other factors are/were at play for you?
2. According to Levy, what is the relationship between food, dietary laws, and the early biblical stories of Creation?
3. What additional biblical sources might mold our creation of a food ethic?
4. What is your reaction to Levy’s proposal that the Reform Movement establish a Reform Kashrut Board? Why? What should the scope of the board be? What criteria should they consider? How do you envision integrating their suggestions in your home or in your congregation?
5. How is kashrut a “new freedom” for Reform Jews?

Chapter 6: On Kashrut

1. What ancient taboos shape the dietary laws? What positive values do the Rabbis ascribe to food preparation and eating?
2. What concerns does Limmer raise about the modern kosher industry? What values does this industry express, and to what extent are they congruent with the ancient values of kosher dietary practice?
3. What is the tension between Israel’s carnality and the laws of kashrut? How does Limmer resolve this tension? What factors guide his decision? How do you view this tension, and what impact does your approach have on your dietary practice?
4. What problem does Limmer point out about the tendency for Reform gatherings to give preference to adherents of the modern kashrut system? To what extent is the Reform Movement responsible to honor the diversity of choices among its members? How can individual Reform communities accommodate the variety of approaches to eating that its members embrace?

Chapter 7: Kashrut and Autonomy

1. According to Kant, what is the relationship between autonomy and morality? How does this pose a challenge to the traditional understanding of the system of mitzvot? How did early Reformers resolve this conflict? What factors limit autonomy?
2. How is autonomy restricted in the process of making dietary choices?
3. How does Henkin's view that "autonomy is irrelevant" shape your understanding of the options available to Reform Jews in the creation of a food ethic?

Chapter 8: Is Dietary Practice Now in the Reform Mainstream? A Survey of Attendees at the 2005 Houston Biennial

1. What are your reactions to the data collected at the 2005 Houston Biennial? What were your expectations? Any surprises?
2. Where do you see yourself in the data collected at the 2005 Houston Biennial? Where do you see your community?
3. Do you agree with the implications of this survey, according to Levy and Gertz? What additional implications do you see, based on these results? Moving forward, how should the Reform Movement prioritize their actions concerning kashrut?

Chapter 9: Real Life / Real Food: A Holy Moment at McDonald's

1. What drives Borowitz to recite the blessing at McDonald's? What factors inhibit him from doing so?
2. How does Borowitz explain the frequency and power of his spiritual experience?
3. Have you had a similar experience? What was it? Where in your life can you carve out moments to "touch the Ultimate?"

Part 2—Buffet of Educated Choices: Jewish Ritual Law

Questions for Part 2

1. What are your reactions to the particulars of the laws of kashrut? What new insights do you have about the rules?
2. What questions are you left with after reading about the laws? In what areas would you like to learn more?
3. How does having basic information about kashrut help you to make decisions about your personal or communal practice?

Chapter 10: An Overview of Ritual Kashrut

1. What information about kashrut did you learn from this chapter?
2. What aspects of the traditional laws of kashrut does Zamore choose to omit from this guide? What values concerning a food ethic are nonnegotiable from the Reform Jewish perspective?
3. How does this information help you to approach your developing food ethic?

Chapter 11: Passover Kashrut: A Reform Approach

1. How do you observe the laws of Passover kashrut in your home? What strategies do you use to help you to adhere to your practice? Where do you find yourself challenged? What ideas from Zamore's article can help you to facilitate or enrich your practice?
2. How does the CCAR Responsum 5756.9 deal with the question of the permissibility of eating *kitniyot*? How do Jewish law and popular custom come into conflict with one another? How does this responsum influence your decision to eat or not eat *kitniyot* during Pesach? Why?
3. Respond to the debate over selling or nullifying *chameitz*. What values are at play? Why does the CCAR take the stance that it does? What is your approach, and why?

Chapter 12: Real Life / Real Food: Kashrut—A Family History

1. What factors contribute to the dietary decisions of each generation of Dreyfus's family?
2. How does family history impact our dietary decisions?
3. What responsibility does one generation have to explain its dietary practice to the next generation? How can both the older generations teach the younger, and vice versa, about their dietary choices?

Part 3—Environmental Ethics: *Bal Tashchit*

Questions for Part 3

1. What major environmental concerns are associated with food? What are some of the proposed ways of addressing these concerns?
2. What Jewish values can guide us as we consider how to manage the environmental impact of our food choices?
3. How do environmental concerns factor into your personal food ethic? For the food ethic of your family? Your community?

Chapter 13: Curb Your Consumerism: Developing a *Bal Tashchit* Food Ethic for Today

1. Consider Ibn Ezra's comment about the importance of trees (pp. 165–66). In what ways are people reliant upon fruit trees?
2. How has *bal tashchit* evolved through the sources? What new applications does the concept have for each era?
3. What are some of the major areas of wastefulness in our system of food production and consumption? What factors contribute toward our potential for wastefulness?
4. What are some ways that you practice *bal tashchit*? What are some ways that you can “curb your consumerism”?

Chapter 14: Connecting Locally: Jumping Off the Production Line

1. What do the Jewish sources say about biodiversity and enjoying the fruits of the land?
2. What other Jewish values are expressed through the support of local agriculture and business?

3. What are your local specialties? How can you encourage your friends and family to embrace local options?

Chapter 15: On High-Tech Science and Our Food: Three Questions

1. What is the tension between Nachmanides's comments on Leviticus 19:19 and Genesis 1:28? How does this apply to the question of GMOs? To what other environmental concerns do the issues raised by Nachmanides apply?
2. What new kashrut issues are raised by the development of GMOs? What larger issues about kashrut are raised by creating species and new types of food in this way?
3. How do we balance scientific exploration and advances with caution and prudence? How does Reform Judaism view technological progress? What aspects of the Reform Jewish perspective urge caution?

Chapter 16: Fish: A Complex Issue

1. What do the journeys of eating decisions embarked upon by Mosbacher and his wife teach us about the paths available to us as we make our own decisions about what to eat?
2. What new information did you learn about the farming and distribution of fish? What surprised you about what you learned?
3. What safer, less environmentally impactful options exist for fish buying and consumption?
4. According to Mosbacher, it is problematic from a Jewish perspective to refrain from action when we learn about something important (p. 190). On what basis does he make this claim? How do you react?

Chapter 17: Getting Back to the Garden

1. What awareness can gardening bring into our lives?
2. What experiences have you had in your life, in a garden or otherwise, where you sensed your role as God's partner in creation? What aspects of your experience brought this to light?
3. How might you incorporate gardening into your life? Is there a space at home, at work, at your synagogue, in your neighborhood, or in another communal space where you can begin a garden? Who might be interested in joining you in this project?

Chapter 18: Real Life / Real Food: Let Your Table Be to You a Temple

1. What are some of the environmental issues related to bananas?
2. What point does Skloot make about the connection between the Temple altar and the kitchen table?
3. How does the ubiquity of bananas impact our decisions regarding their consumption?

Part 4—*Kindness to Animals*: Tzaar Baalei Chayim

Questions for Part 4

1. What issues of *tzaar baalei chayim* are connected to food?
2. What are some of the dietary options for addressing concerns of *tzaar baalei chayim*?
3. How does each author arrive at his/her conclusions regarding dietary choices? What values factor into their decisions?

Chapter 19: Kindness to Animals: *Tzaar Baalei Chayim*

1. What grabs you from the biblical and Rabbinic teachings on *tzaar baalei chayim*?
2. Looking at your personal and communal food choices, where do you see the most dire examples of *tzaar baalei chayim*? Where do you see the most attention given to alleviating these issues?
3. How do these concerns fit into the development of a food ethic?

Chapter 20: I'll Have What She's Having: Jewish Ethical Vegetarianism

1. What are the “rational” and “irrational” parts of your dietary practice? What makes these aspects rational or irrational? What factors besides rationality influence your dietary choices? What “wake-up” moments have you experienced?
2. How does a vegetarian diet help to alleviate issues of *tzaar baalei chayim*?
3. What other reasons does Sameth use to support vegetarianism? To what extent are these Jewish ideas? What makes them so?

Chapter 21: Continuity and Change in Reform Views of Kashrut 1883–2002: From the *T'reifah* Banquet to Eco-Kashrut

1. What role does the acceptance and encouragement of vegetarianism play in the overall evolution of the Reform Jewish view of kashrut?
2. According to Gross's study, how does vegetarianism address Jewish concerns about eating?
3. What is the difference between gentile and Jewish vegetarianism? What is the significance of making the comparison between the two?

Chapter 22: Meat Minimalism: Were We Meant to Be Ethical Omnivores

1. How does Perolman challenge the notion that vegetarianism is the Jewish ideal?
2. What are some ways that people incorporate ethical ideas into a diet that includes meat?
3. How can limiting meat consumption serve to consecrate the act? How might you decide to consecrate your dietary choices, regardless of whether they include meat?

Chapter 23: Blood, Sweat, and Tears: The Making of a Reform *Shochet*

1. What motivated the students to learn to be *shochtim*? What were the elements of their training? How did actual slaughter compare to their expectations?
2. How do the themes of life and death play out in their experience?
3. How does study and firsthand experience influence one's dietary choices? In what ways might you replicate parts of their experience for yourself in order to learn more about kashrut?

Chapter 24: Real Life / Real Food: A Letter to My Vegetarian Husband

1. What emotions does Klein experience regarding her temptation toward eating meat?
2. What kinds of issues might come up between a couple or in a family where different people have different eating habits? What are some ways to maintain *sh'lom bayit* (peace in the home) in these cases?
3. Does Klein portray the development of a food ethic as a onetime decision or as an ongoing project? What are the challenges for each kind of approach? What are the benefits for each?

Part 5—Concern for Oppressed Food Workers: *Oshek*

Questions for Part 5

1. In what ways is *oshek* a concern for food production?
2. What role does the concern for oppressed food workers play in the development of a personal or communal food ethic? What happens when widely accepted notions of *kashrut* are accompanied by issues of *oshek*?
3. How can Reform Jews, as individuals, communities, and as a Movement, increase awareness about workers' rights and work to make large-scale, positive, lasting changes?

Chapter 25: *Oshek*: The Meeting Point of Ritual Piety and Moral Purity in a Contemporary Reform Kashrut

1. How has the Reform Movement dealt in the past with concerns of *oshek* in the food system?
2. What are some of the chief instances of *oshek* in our food system today?
3. How can we become more savvy about these issues and take action to prevent the mistreatment of workers involved in farming, food production, and preparation?

Chapter 26: Our Dark Addictions: Chocolate, Coffee, and Tea

1. What are some of the ethical concerns present in the chocolate, coffee, and tea industries?
2. What attempts to rectify these problems are being used today? To what extent do they solve the problem?
3. How can we turn our awareness of these problems into action? In light of our “addictions” to these substances, what type of approach is most pragmatic? Abstention? Only purchasing certain brands? Only eating or drinking products that come from humane sources?

Chapter 27: A Look Back at the Reform Movement's Response to the United Farm Workers Grape Boycott

1. How did Reform Jews and the Reform Movement take action against the abuse of farm workers?
2. What do these actions teach us about how to get involved with these issues today, on a movement-wide, communal, and individual level?
3. Besides the ethical importance of taking action against injustice, what effect does a boycott have on a community?

Chapter 28: Real Life / Real Food: Post-Postville and Onward

1. What legal and ethical violations were discovered at the Agriprocessors plant in 2008?
2. What is “unkosher” about the Agriprocessors plant? What role do these factors play in your definition of *kashrut* as it plays out in your dietary choices?
3. The raid exposed the severity of violations at the plant, and yet it also had a devastating effect on the employees and residents of Postville. How do we make sense out of the complexity of these issues? To what or whom do we look for help navigating these conflicting issues?

Part 6—*Hechsher*: Who Decides What Is Kosher?

Questions for Part 6

1. What concerns are traditionally evaluated in order to label something as “kosher”? In what ways do the authors of the chapters in this section challenge the traditional criteria of *kashrut*? What criteria do these authors add to the consideration of what deserves a *hechsher*?
2. What is the role of the *mashgiach/chah*? From a Reform Jewish perspective, what qualifies a *mashgiach/chah* to grant a *hechsher* to food products, bakeries, or dining establishments?
3. In what contexts is it important for you that your food production or preparation is overseen by a *mashgiach/chah*? On what factors would you ideally like the *mashgiach/chah* to be basing his or her judgment of the *kashrut* of the food?

Chapter 29: Considering *Hechsher*

1. What does it mean for a product to have a *hechsher*? How do *hechshers* simplify the process of finding kosher food?
2. What barriers make it challenging for certain products or eating establishments to receive a *hechsher*?
3. In your opinion, what aspects of the food product should a *hechsher* certify as fit for consumption?

Chapter 30: We Answer to an Even Higher Authority

1. Looking in your own refrigerator and pantry, what evidence do you see of the lengthening of the food chain that Silverman describes?
2. How does the Agriprocessors affair reveal the problems associated with the lengthening kosher food chain?
3. What solutions do the new “gatekeepers” that Silverman writes about offer for shortening the food chain? Which of these solutions can be integrated into your personal or communal eating choices?

Chapter 31: But is the *Mashgichah* Kosher?

1. Describe Zamore’s experience as she became a *mashgichah* and fought for recognition in the larger Jewish community.

2. What reasons do the concerned rabbis claim for not relying on Zamore's *hechsher*? How does she face these challenges to her authority?
3. What issues within the Jewish community are brought to light through Zamore's experience? What are some ways of easing these conflicts?

Chapter 32: Wine: Our Symbol of Joy

1. What symbolic role does wine play in Jewish practice? What positive associations do you have with wine from your life?
2. What makes a wine kosher by Orthodox standards? What concerns do these standards raise for Reform Jews?
3. What positive values regarding the environment, Israel, Jewish-gentile relations, and so on can we uphold through our wine selection?

Chapter 33: Real Life / Real Food: *Kiddush* and Mad Dog 20-20—A Kosher Combination?

1. What ethical concerns are associated with fortified wines?
2. What responsibility do the wineries that produce these beverages have to consider the safety of the consumers?
3. How can we take action to ensure that the Star of David reference in the name of Mad Dog 20-20 is not dishonored through the damages caused by this product?

Part 7—Guarding Our Health: *Sh'mirat HaGuf*

Questions for Part 7

1. What health concerns are raised by the authors of the selections in this section? What experiences have you had with these health concerns?
2. Why is it important to raise issues of health in a Jewish context? What Jewish values contribute to the endeavor of making healthy choices for the individual and the community?
3. How does Judaism send contradictory messages about food and health? What are some ways to avoid these pitfalls and bring our actions in sync with our highest aspirations for our health?

Chapter 34: Palates, Pilates, Politics: A Prophetic Vision for Eating

1. Cutter traces his love of eating to the values of his family of origin. In what ways are your personal dietary choices influenced by your upbringing? What changes have you made from eating in the way that you were raised?
2. What contributions do classic Jewish texts make in support of health-conscious eating?
3. How, according to Cutter, can we better utilize Jewish sources to inform our dietary choices? What examples does he provide? What additional examples can you think of?

Chapter 35: Of Pharisees and Allergies: *Shulchan Shalom*

1. What characteristics marked the Pharisaic table fellowships?

2. What potential does the *Oneg Shabbat* have to bring the community together? What values guided Sagal and his congregation to accommodate the needs of congregants with allergies and other dietary restrictions?
3. What “table fellowships” are you a part of? To what extent does the food served reflect the values of the Pharisees? Where is there room for improvement, and what needs to change to make this possible?

Chapter 36: Returning Food to Its Rightful Place: Eating Disorders in the Jewish Community

1. How might Jewish history play a role in shaping our communities’ attitudes toward food? Have you seen examples of this in your experience?
2. In what ways are eating disorders addictions? In what way, according to Zlotnick, is this addiction unique? In light of the ubiquity of food, how can we be sensitive to those who are battling eating disorders in our families and communities?
3. What steps can we take to hold onto the joyous role that food plays in the Jewish community while promoting a healthy relationship with food? What Jewish values inform these decisions?

Chapter 37: Real Life / Real Food: Redefining Healthy Eating, For Life

1. To what extent are you “present” while you eat? Why is presence important? How might you increase your presence at your table?
2. What opportunities does Shabbat provide for an enhanced eating experience? How can you create a spirit of *oneg* at home and in your community?
3. How does having a healthy body allow one to serve God? What is the spiritual impact of not taking one’s health seriously? How can you, along with your family and friends, pledge to serve God through caring for your health?

Part 8—Justice: *Tzedek*

Questions for Part 8

1. In what ways do the values of Reform Judaism contribute to a more just engagement with food?
2. What individual and collective actions are suggested by the authors of the selections in part 8 in order to instill our food choices with concerns for justice?
3. How can members of the community support one another in making just food choices? How can Reform Jewish communities partner with local Jewish and non-Jewish communities to create a larger voice in the demand for justice?

Chapter 38: Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat: Food Ethics, *Tzedakah*, and How We Celebrate

1. What is so shocking about Spector’s story? What “rights” do the poor members of the community have to strike? What does Reb Yitzchok learn?

2. What do Jewish sources teach about food justice? What key values can be learned from these sources?
3. How can our *s'machot* better represent the Jewish concerns for *tzedakah* and *chesed*? How can including measures to live out these values enhance the level of celebration?

Chapter 39: Pricing Ourselves Out of the Market: Is Eating Kosher (Ritually and Ethically) a Privilege of the Rich?

1. How does the price of food interfere with the practical execution of other aspirations that we have for the food that we eat? What are some examples of this from your own experience?
2. How does “satisfaction” serve as a standard for our food choices? How does this standard resonate with you?
3. What are some ways that you and your community can take actions such as those in Zeplovitz’s suggestions? What positive outcomes do you predict? What obstacles might you need to work around?

Chapter 40: Raising Our Voices for Food Justice

1. What was the original purpose of the Farm Bill? How have farming subsidies evolved to become a problematic part of our national food policy?
2. What is a “food desert”? How can a change in food policy make affordable, quality food more widely available?
3. What Jewish values impel us to raise our voices for food justice? How might you take action to support local agriculture and reform our national food policy?

Chapter 41: Real Life / Real Food: Bread, Torah, and *Tikkun*

1. What values are taken into consideration by the organizers of the bakery? How are these values manifest in the products that they use, the people who staff the bakery, and the people who receive the final product?
2. Slice of Heaven Breads is powered by volunteers with a variety of backgrounds and reasons for being involved. What do you think the experience is like from each of their perspectives? What do you think they might gain from the experience? What do you think the bread means to the recipients?
3. What message is sent through the ritual of tithing the challah, as practiced communally at the bakery?

Part 9—Spirituality

Questions for Part 9

1. In what ways do the authors of the selections in part 9 connect food to spirituality? How do they expand your understanding of spirituality and the ways in which food intersects with spirituality?

2. How can individuals connect more deeply spiritually through their connection to food? How about on a communal level?
3. What aspects of eating connect us to God or make us more aware of the world around us?

Chapter 42: Food Preparation as a Holy Act: *Hafrashat Challah*

1. What is the ancient significance of *hafrashat challah*? What spiritual significance does this ritual have for Abusch-Magder today? How are these meanings similar, and how have they evolved over time?
2. According to Abusch-Magder, what is lost through the factory production of challah? How might you recapture the spiritual element of baking or of other forms of food preparation?
3. How does *hafrashat challah* represent our covenant with God? How can the performance of this ritual increase our awareness of this covenant and enhance our commitment to fulfilling it?

Chapter 43: The Joy and Privilege of Blessings Before and After a Meal

1. What is the meaning of the *Motzi* blessing, and when is it recited? Which foods have their own blessings? What are some of the many reminders that we receive when we recite these blessings before eating?
2. What is the purpose of reciting *Birkat HaMazon*? What significance is added when the blessing is recited at a communal meal? After a family meal? When recited after eating alone?
3. What are some of the major themes of *Birkat HaMazon*? How are these related to food? How does eating remind us of our other individual and communal needs and the role of God in our lives?

Chapter 44: We Eat First: A Congregational Snapshot

1. What inspired Rabbi Lippmann to place communal eating before services? What has come about as a result of this decision?
2. How does eating create community? More specifically, what attributes of the Kolot Chayeinu community does the author suggest are related to the nature and frequency of their communal meals?
3. If you are affiliated with a religious community, when do you gather together for meals? What rituals do you partake in? What values are expressed through the decisions about the timing of these meals, the type and the source of the food that is eaten, and so on? How can you enhance your communal meals to better represent the values of your community?

Chapter 45: What I Eat Is Who I Am: Kashrut and Identity

1. What foods might a Jew refrain from eating as part of building his or her identity? What foods might he or she make a point of eating as part of forming his or her identity? What other dietary choices are identity building?
2. How does Knobel define “kashrut?” Why?
3. Thinking about your diet, what statements does it make about your Jewish identity? What are the challenges of incorporating Jewish choices into your diet? What reasons does Knobel offer for bringing Judaism into one’s diet? What is your opinion?

Chapter 46: Tzom: Fasting as a Religious/Spiritual Practice

1. What are the different types of fasts? In each case, when do these fasts take place? How long do they last? What is the basis for each? Who takes part?
2. How is fasting a spiritual act? How can prayers enhance the spirituality of fasting? If one cannot fast for the full length or at all, how can the blessings in this chapter maintain the spiritual significance of the fast?
3. If you are able to fast, on what occasions do you choose to do so? What does the discipline mean to you? What are the spiritual implications of your fast? How can you, as an individual, or along with your family or community, heighten your spiritual experience when you fast?

Chapter 47: Real Life / Real Food: An Introduction to Hunger

1. What shortcoming of fasting on Yom Kippur does Weber deal with through his sermon? What made his sermon so successful?
2. What purpose or outcome of fasting is most strongly emphasized in Weber's congregation?
3. How can you, as an individual or in your community, live out the principle "If there is no bread, there is no Torah"?

Part 10—Making Your Choices: *Shalom*

Questions for Part 10

1. What are your priorities for shaping your personal food ethic? What values are important for you to include? How have the articles in this book informed your views on these topics?
2. What are your priorities for considering a communal food ethic? What values are important for you to include? How have the essays in this book informed your views on these topics?
3. How do you think differently about a personal food ethic and a communal food ethic? What aspects are important for you to see in both? Where do you see room for discrepancy?

Chapter 48: Your Personal Kashrut: *Sh'leimut* and *Sh'lom Bayit*

1. What is *sh'leimut*? How does this value guide our food choices? What is an example of a dietary choice that you make that contributes toward your *sh'leimut*?
2. What is *sh'lom bayit*? In what ways does this value factor into an evolving Jewish dietary practice? What is an example of the influence of *sh'lom bayit* on your food choices?
3. How is the process of making your dietary choices an "adventure"? What twists and turns do you anticipate on your adventure? What are you most looking forward to? What concerns do you have? What resources will you turn to for information and support?

Chapter 49: Creating a Reform Communal Dietary Policy

1. According to Brown, what is the importance of the decision-making process? Why? What does he propose as the best decision-making process for this endeavor?
2. Read each of the five steps in the process. What is the goal for each session? What values are expressed in each session?

3. How would this approach work in your synagogue, *chavurah*, or other type of religious community? What is the benefit of a systematic approach to decision making? How does this process differ from other ways that you make decisions?

Chapter 50: Real Life / Real Food: Kosher Christmas Dinner

1. What are the differences in eating habits in this family? What values regarding food does everyone seem to share?
2. What are some examples of compromises that are made by the members of this family? On what basis do they make these decisions?
3. Think about your own family. What are some examples of the different dietary choices that the members of your family make? What happens when you come together to eat? What compromises are made in the name of *sh'lom bayit*? How does your family communicate about food decisions?