

Jewish Family Times

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Adar - a time to...

Embrace Joy and Project Kindness

Tzimtzum 7
2016/5776

Enter Adar with Tikkun Olam

IT'S ADAR! According to the Jewish cycle, it is time to emerge from our winter shells and embrace joy. Focus on your heart. Do you feel a tickle of tight buds, waiting to become blossoms in your soul?

Begin your seasonal re-awakening by taking a micro-break. Stand up! Take three deep breaths, relax your jaw, circle your shoulders, move your arms, and wiggle your toes and legs. Now think of one, two, or three wonderful things that happened recently. Savor one. Embracing gratitude can lower your heart-rate, reduce stress, broaden your mind, and even strengthen your immunity.

Now that you're centered, you can shower the people around you with kindness and *Tikkun Olam*, the process of repairing the world. The Torah commands us **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ** (*v'ahavta l'rayecha kamocho*), which means "love your neighbor as yourself." Our actions build a **קְהִלָּה קְדוֹשָׁה** (*kehillah kedoshah*), a sacred community. You can share a smile with a stranger, offer an extra encouragement, hold a door open, and go out of your way to give a helping hand.

Adar is a month for shifting emotions, perceptions, and actions. This year we get a double blessing opportunity due to the Jewish leap year. Adar II continues into April. Purim, the celebration of opposites falls on March 24, 2015. Continue reading for inspirations to expand gratitude, embrace blessings, and enhance your caring community.



B'hatzlachah ~ Good luck!

This publication contains names of God. Please treat it with appropriate respect.

Pitome Publishing, LLC ★ PO Box 30961, Santa Barbara, CA 93130 ★ (805) 898-9207 PST
★ www.pitome.com ★ info@pitome.com ★

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written and edited by Nina Gelman-Gans



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Why Pray in Community?

Prayer gatherings have multiple benefits. The primary function is to turn our hearts away from the trivialities of our lives, and toward heaven. That is, to pray.

An equally vital function of communal prayer is to bring us together, physically. It helps us remember the deep, unspoken, sub-conscious bonds that connect us; to remember the visceral experience of being part of a communal body.

It is my experience that while gathering simply for prayer and fellowship—the work of the community gets done...and gets done very well. People converse. They shake hands and hug. They share information. They make commitments to each other, and silently, implicitly, they re-affirm their collective commitments to the Jewish people, to Torah, and to God.

This is how a real, living community grows.

—Rabbi Stephen E. Cohen,
Santa Barbara, CA



Making room for appreciations is a win-win effort. The act of prayer can shift future possibilities. Start with the gender-inclusive blessing by poet and author Marcia Falk and/or immerse in Alden Solovy's interpretation of *misheberach* healing.

May the blessings of peace and kindness, graciousness, goodness, and compassion flow among us and all the communities of Israel, all the peoples of the world.

As we bless the source of life so we are blessed.

(May this Sabbath bring peace and restoration.)

יִשְׂרוּ שְׁלוֹם, טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה,
חוֹ וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים
בֵּינֵנוּ,
בֵּין כָּל עַדוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וּבֵין כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל.
נְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים
וְכֵן נִתְבָּרֵךְ,
שֶׁבֶת שְׁלוֹם וּמְנוּחָה.

Yishru shalom, tovah uvrakhah, / heyn vahésed v'rahamim, / beynéynu,
beyn kol adot yisra'eyl, / Uveyn kol yosh'vey teyveyl.

N'vareykh et eyn hahayim / v'khoh nitbareykh.

(Shabbat shalom umnuhah.)

-by Marcia Falk

Misheberach Prayer for Healing by Alden Solovy

God of love,
Cast the light of health and well-being
On the injured, the inform and the insecure,
All who yearn for Your healing hand.
Bless them with healing of body,
Healing of soul,
And healing of spirit.
Grant all in need a full and complete recovery.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God,
Source of Life.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
מְקוֹר חַיִּים.

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Team Tikkun Olam

**“It is not your responsibility to fix the world,
but neither may you abstain from the work.”**

- Pirkei Avot 2:16

One caring individual can make such a difference. Since my daughter is in her b'nai mitzvah year, we've had the pleasure of helping her peers fulfill a vision of *tikkun olam*, fixing the world. Chosen projects have serviced neglected animals, fish farmers in Rwanda, Soles 4 Soles, and water for African villages. I encourage you to reach out beyond your daily doing to bring a smile to a stranger, even if you will never meet them in your lifetime. Below are some teasers to help you consider your next step.

ENVIRONMENT

NEW

One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia by Miranda Paul. Western civilization

reared its head in Njau, Gambia, in the form of burgeoning plastic bags.

The colorful bags piled up everywhere, strangling gardens, harming livestock, and providing breeding grounds for malaria. Isatou looked beyond the garbage disaster to create a cottage industry and a new economy for the village. Local and low tech, she forever altered the health of her community. In 2012, Njau opened their first public library. How can this inspire your children? (ages 6-10)



PRAYER

Jewish Prayers of Hope and Healing by Alden Solovy. Following the unexpected and startling death of his wife, Solovy began crafting healing blessings. This compilation grew out of his popular online blog postings. His vast array of soul-searching compositions will help you pray from your heart. Multiple approaches frame your sentiments stemming from loss, joy, despair, illness, and healing.

Taking time to pray and find solace helps has two-way benefits. When someone is ailing, we say a traditional healing *misheberach*. Solovy offers several “quick” thoughts and a series of appeals to the God of love, sustenance, and life and many other appealing affirmations. This is a great collection to inspire personal, communal, or external healing. (adult)

STUDENT POWERED ACTION

There are so many ways for kids to help others. **Little Dresses for Africa** is a fabulous mitzvah project that can involve many hands. There is a learning curve to prepare the pillowcases. Following that, there is room for endless creativity.



Photo courtesy of Kim Sutherland © 2016

Recently, teen inspired, middle school students and moms gathered to make pillowcase dresses. Since we're a pillowcase family and enjoy sewing and being creative, my daughter and I hopped on this project as soon as it was mentioned. One afternoon produced about 18 delightful dresses and a lot of feel-good warm fuzzies.

Students opted to use peace doves as a unifying theme utilizing Pitome's Seek Peace tracing stencil.

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