



Shabbat Trumah Message 5778/Rosh Chodesh Adar  
February 16, 2018

Dear Shir Tikvah,

Today begins the Hebrew month of Adar. The Talmud teaches, "Mishenichnas Adar marbim b'simcha," When Adar enters, joy increases. It's the month of Purim: Be Happy!

I love the idea that somehow-almost magically, as if by Divine command-joy increases in our lives simply by the month turning from Sh'vat into Adar. I love that we have a holiday whose greeting is "Freilich Purim" - A Joyous Purim!

But the truth is for many of us, joy on command or by demand or by the changing of the seasons seems like a real stretch.

We are grieving.  
We are spiritually wounded.  
We are living with depression.  
We are in difficult, complicated relationships.  
We are in jobs that are tough.  
We are hurt.  
We are sad.

The truth is that Judaism doesn't ask us to ignore our pain. Purim calls us to be joyous amidst a story of evil leaders who attempted to wipe us out. We are asked to express joy not despite the challenges and pain of human existence, but because of them.

Those who sow in tears will reap in joy, the Psalmist proclaims.

One of my favorite Midrashim goes like this: When Moshe descended Mount Sinai with the 10 commandments and discovered the people had built the Golden Calf, he smashed the first set of tablets into a bazillion pieces. He and God calmed down, Moshe ascended the Mountain once again, and received a second set of tablets. But the rabbis asked, "What of the first set of shattered pieces? What became of them?"

We are taught that the people tenderly gathered up the broken shards and placed them into the holy ark next to the whole set.

The broken and the whole were carried side by side throughout the desert.

Perhaps with us, too: We carry the broken and the whole with us throughout our lives. We are reminded, in this month of Adar, that even in places of sharp brokenness and shattered hearts, joy is possible. We can laugh in the face of absurdity. Happiness can fill our hearts.

May it be so, for all of us.

Wishing you robust joy and fierce tenderness in abundance this Adar,

Michael  
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