

## March 2017 Message from Rabbi Dubin

Dear Friends,

The Jewish month of Adar began on Friday Evening, February 26...and the timing couldn't have been better, because, according to the Talmud (Taanit 29a), "When the month of Adar enters, we increase in joy (בשמחה מרבין אדר משוננס)." If ever in our recent memory there were a time that we've needed to increase in joy, certainly this would be it!

As anyone can see, we are living in angry times. Regardless of political affiliation or socioeconomic class, we and most of our fellow Americans are angry. We are taking to the streets, posting on the internet, and taking matters into our own hands. It's palpable, it's disturbing, and it has the tendency to get loud and aggressive. Even worse, we have become a society of fear. Some of us fear immigrants, and some fear the rise of xenophobia. Some fear minority religious traditions, and some fear the increasing presence of a single religious perspective in our public discourse. Some fear government overreach into our lives, while others fear there's not enough government involvement in our lives. Some fear we will lose healthcare, while others fear we won't be able to afford the healthcare we already have if things don't change. Some fear the violence being perpetrated by lawless citizens, while others fear the violence perpetrated by those sworn to protect us. Some fear we don't have enough guns in the hands of ordinary people, while others fear we have too many guns in the hands of ordinary people. Yes, we are a polarized society, but if there is one thing unifying us, unfortunately, it seems to be our shared anger, fear, and distrust of others.

Thank Goodness for Adar, the month of Purim, the time when we celebrate our delivery from destruction! For anyone who's had the pleasure of spending time in our building recently and seeing or hearing our Spielers prepare for their Purim performance, you know what happiness looks and sounds like. For anyone who's ever seen our children dress in costume, sing joyous songs of Purim, or come away with sticky hands from hamantaschen filling, you, too, know what happiness looks like. For anyone who's lived the experience of giving or receiving *Mishloach Manot* (special gifts of Purim food) and *Matanot l'Evyonim* (gifts to the poor), as we are instructed to do in Esther 9:22, you as well know what happiness feels like.

Yes, we live in challenging times. Yes, we spend our days navigating the landmines of anger and fear. Yes, we must keep paying attention, and yes, we may have legitimate reasons to be angry or scared, but so too are we the inheritors of a wise tradition. Sometimes, even if we don't know how, we need to make space for joy and happiness. And if you don't know how, just follow the adage, "Fake it 'til you make it." Force a smile. Put yourself in joyous situations. Find reasons to be happy. Mind you, this will be easier for some than others. For some, moving from anger and fear to happiness can be achieved by a mere change in attitude. For others, it is far more challenging and requires the help of medical professionals. But for all of us, it requires a series of conscious decisions. So, whether you already count yourself among the happy or not, I

invite and encourage you to join us on [Sunday morning, March 12 \(the 14th of Adar\)](#) [to support our Spielers](#), appreciate our children, eat some hamantaschen, and increase our collective joy.

Be Happy! It's Adar!!!

Rabbi Dubin

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