

# WHAT DOES THE WORLD NEED FROM YOU?

**A GUIDED CONVERSATION**



# WELCOME

## Core Purpose & Mission

TriBEs are about small groups of people that are learning together through the pursuit of Jewish wisdom; praying together and developing personal spiritual practices and inspiring worship that uplifts the soul and connects to God; Acting together through ongoing significant acts of loving kindness and world repair; Playing together in fun social settings where people can relax, laugh, and be ourselves; Caring for each other by valuing and supporting one another in times of joy and sorrow; and are Accountable to each other through shared leadership that serves the best interests of the individual and community.



## Blessing

As we gather in our TriBE, may we honor the values of our Jewish tradition. May we bring compassion, insight, and wisdom to our presence with each other through learning and dialogue. May we recognize the Divine Image in one another, and let that awareness be reflected in our words and actions.

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzi-vanu la'asok b'tzorkhay tzibur.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Source of All, who has made us holy with your mitzvot and instructed us to engage deeply with our community.

## Brit

Before we begin, let's review the brit (covenant) that enriches our time together.



## ASK & SHARE

Take a minute to think about a gift, ability, or talent you have that you have not yet found a way to share in this community. Once everyone is ready, we will each be invited (but not required) to share our answer with the group.

You can use the space below to make some notes to yourself.

## LEARN

The following poem by Marge Piercy considers the question we are considering today: “What does the world need from us?”

Take a minute to read the poem out loud, together.

To Be of Use  
by Marge Piercy

The people I love the best  
jump into work head first  
without dallying in the shallows  
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.  
They seem to become natives of that element,  
the black sleek heads of seals  
bouncing like half submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,  
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,  
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,  
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge  
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest  
and work in a row and pass the bags along,  
who stand in the line and haul in their places,  
who are not parlor generals and field deserters  
but move in a common rhythm  
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.  
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.  
But the thing worth doing well done  
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.  
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,  
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums  
but you know they were made to be used.  
The pitcher cries for water to carry  
and a person for work that is real.

“To be of use” by Marge Piercy © 1973, 1982.

From *Circles on the Water*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. and Middlemarsh, Inc., 1982.

As we reflect on this text, here are a few questions to consider:

### **Interpretive Questions**

- What does the narrator of Piercy's poem mean in the last lines, when she says, "The pitcher cries for water to carry / and a person for work that is real?"
- What is "real" work, to Piercy?

### **Reflective Questions**

- Have you ever clearly known what the world, or part of the world, needed from you?
- American writer Frederick Buechner observed, "The place God calls you to is where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet," (Wishful Thinking, 1973). What deep hunger do you sense in the world, and how does it relate to your own passions and gifts?

You can use the space below to write some notes to yourself.

## PERSPECTIVES FROM JEWISH TRADITION

Below is a Hasidic story that may deepen our understanding of what the world needs from each of us.

The following is a Hasidic tale about Rabbi Meshulam Zusya of Annopol, in Poland (1718-1800). As the story goes, one day he did not arrive to the study house as usual, so his students went to his home to see what had happened.

The students entered Rabbi Zusya's house. In the far corner of the room they saw the old rabbi lying huddled in bed, too ill to get up and greet them. "Rabbi Zusya!" his students cried. "What has happened? How can we help you?"

"There is nothing you can do," answered Zusya. "I'm dying and I am very frightened."

"Why are you afraid?" the youngest student asked. "Didn't you teach us that all living things die?"

"Of course, of course, every living thing must die some day," said the Rabbi. The young student tried to comfort Rabbi Zusya saying, "Then why are you afraid? You have led such a good life. You have believed in God with a faith as strong as Abraham's. and you have followed the commandments as carefully as Moses."

"Thank you. But this is not why I am afraid," explained the rabbi. "For if God should ask me why I did not act like Abraham, I can say that I was not Abraham. And if God asks me why I did not act like Moses, I can also say that I was not Moses." Then the rabbi said, "But if God should ask me to account for the times when I did not act like Zusya, what shall I say then?"

## Discussion Questions:

- Why is Rabbi Zusya afraid?
- What does it mean to “act like Zusya”?
- What does Zusya think the world—or God—requires of him? Does he think of those as the same thing, or different things? Do you?

You can use the space below to write some notes to yourself.

# DO

As we conclude the conversation, here are a few final questions to consider.

- What's one insight that you've gained from this conversation?
- What is one action you might take, or practice you might try, before we meet next time, based on what you're taking from this conversation?
- What's one obstacle to taking that action? How can you overcome it? Who might you need help from in order to do so?
- What could we do together as a community based on what we talked about today?

You can use the space below to write some notes to yourself.

**Thank you for being part of this conversation.**



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