



Torah for Turbulent Times: **"Acts of Loving-Kindness"**

I'm overwhelmed - *with nachas!* What a nice break it is to be overwhelmed with joy for a few moments during these days, as a dark social distancing cloud continues to hang over our lives. I've received numerous emails and thank you's for the flowers and herbs that were delivered to all of our members' curbsides last week. In total, 180 addresses! What a joy as well just to get out and about for a bit, as I dropped some of these off at various homes. It was an unexpected bonus to be able to do some meet and greet as well (from the appropriate social distance, of course). This got me thinking, if this simple act can bring so much joy to so many, both giver and receiver, what else can we do?

Given this delight and that we're two weeks away from the holiday of Shavuot (more on this soon), I was thinking of the Jewish teaching, *al shlosha d'varim*. "The world stands on three foundations: *Torah*, *avodah* and *gemilut hasadim*." (Pirkei Avot 1:2)

-*Torah*/Learning - Opportunities for study abound in the community with a weekly Psalms class and a special class this evening. At [7:00 pm tonight](#) we'll gather together to study the Torah portion of the week in depth. On the topic of study, if you or your household are interested in learning more about any Jewish topic at all, just let me know (rabbi@uvjc.org). It would be my pleasure to schedule a brief chat with you by phone or Zoom for a personalized, 30 minute mini-course.

-*Avodah*/Heart-service, worship - Each week we're joining together for Shabbat. And, what a crowd we had for services last weekend, both for Friday evening and for Saturday morning's bat mitzvah! While this feels different on Zoom, it's also especially meaningful to pray and to connect as a congregation. Our hearts are scattered among many homes, but gathering together on one screen unites our intentions, especially as we pray for much needed healing at this time.

-*Gemilut Hasadim*/Acts of Loving-Kindness - With our Spring/Mother's Day flower and herb deliveries complete, what else, big or small, can we do to bring more joy into our world? What can you do from your home, alone? What can we do as a community, together?

When the world feels shaky and unsteady we could use an additional something to

latch onto. One suggestion is to return to our foundations. Perhaps spending as much time on these three suggested scaffoldings can help us regain and remain, in balance.

-Rabbi Mark