

CHARRY SERVICE
YOM KIPPUR HAFTARAH INTRODUCTION
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Let me get right to the point! A critical idea in this Haftarah is that fasting on Yom Kippur is not enough. We need to do more – as Isaiah says: to “unlock the fetters of wickedness, to let the oppressed go free, to provide clothing and homes for the poor” – in other words to do good in the world, to heal the world, to do “Tikkun Olam”. For many years, Germantown Jewish Centre has been a place where we help our members do good works. So, because we take Isaiah’s words very seriously, I decided to let him know about our work! I found his cell phone number on the Internet and called him. First, I got to speak with his angelic secretary, who fortunately was willing to put me through to him. Here’s how our conversation went.

Me: Hello Isaiah (I hope it’s OK to call you that). Good to talk with you. I’m representing Germantown Jewish Centre and our Tikkun Olam work....Oh, you’ve heard about us and the work we are doing...Yes, yes, thank you. What? Oh, yes, I will let our rabbi know that you like his sermons and let Nina know you like her singing. And you also like listening to our musical band G’vanim and our chorus...Wow! That’s terrific....But back to Tikkun Olam, we have a lot going on here...Yes, we do help feed the poor, and educate students in our local public schools...Thanks....Did you know that we also just installed solar panels on the roof of the synagogue? Oh, sorry. I realize you don’t know what a solar panel is. We’re having a climate crisis on the planet and we need to change our energy sources – Oh, you know a little about that – you had some major crises with climate, flooding, and too much rainfall. Yes, I remember.....

Listen, I really wanted to let you know that we are taking your prophetic words very seriously, and are encouraging our members to do all sorts of Tikkun Olam, both big and small...Well, thanks for suggesting we keep working at it! We will keep encouraging all our members to do more to help others, to develop new ideas and new Tikkun Olam programs and initiatives– to find more ways to help

heal the world. What? OK, yes, we'll call again next year and let you know how it's going...Bye, Shalom, and Happy New Year to you, too!...

So that was my phone conversation with Isaiah – very pleasant. Now, with Isaiah's words in mind, I want to urge you to ask yourself this question:

“What more can I do in this coming year to make the world a better place”?

Here are some things to consider: try to be kinder to those around you; do more to help a neighbor in distress; work between now and November 5th for candidates that you think will help to heal the world; work with the Jewish Relief Agency and Philabundance to provide food for people in need; buy more Fair Trade products to help people around the world; give more to organizations at home and abroad that help others. If you have time during the day, volunteer each week to read or do math mentoring with a local public school student.

To find out more about these and other initiatives we are involved with, visit the GJC website. If you have an idea for a new Tikkun Olam initiative at GJC, or want to get involved in one, come to a GJC meeting that will be held in the near future to brainstorm and plan. There is also a bookmark at various locations in the building today that you can take with you that tells you more about tikkun olam at GJC. And, if you aren't on it already, you can join our GJC Tikkun Olam listserve so that you periodically receive e-mails about volunteer opportunities and other Tikkun Olam information. Just let the office know you want to be included on the TO list serve.

L'Shana Tova – may we all have a good and sweet year. In the coming year may we offer our gifts and blessings for the well-being of all, and may this year show us all the ways to live in harmony and peace with each other and all the earth. As Margaret Mead once said “Never doubt that a group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”