

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish (Internet) Connection!

Your Jewish Connection – Tikkun Olam and Tzedakah

Brought to you by the TBA Lifelong Learning Committee - Written by Linda S Trapasso

We hear about *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah* as part of our Jewish lives. *Tikkun olam* concerns repairing the world – a call to engage in social action. *Tzedakah* refers to charity or philanthropy. Many of us donate funds to charitable organizations to fulfill this mitzvah.

You can find more information about these at Web sites we've visited previously, such as www.myjewishlearning.com and www.alljewishlinks.com. Enter one of the terms in the Search box in the upper right to find the references on the site. You'll get quite a few items to choose from. For example, on www.alljewishlinks.com, you'll find a listing for the book *The Jewish Woman Next Door: Repairing the World One Step at a Time*. It's a collection of "essays about contemporary Jewish women, some known throughout the world, others known only in their own communities, who engage in extraordinary acts of kindness."

To read a history of *tikkun olam* that's a very thorough description through the ages, go to www.jewishjustice.org/download/section42/The_History_of_Tikkun_Olam_ZEEK.pdf. Just as I did, you'll learn that *tikkun olam* appears first in the *Aleinu* prayer and is the subject of several *midrashim*.

The Jewish Community Federation in the San Francisco, CA, area hands out Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Awards. For 2011, projects included textbooks for Liberia, a community-sponsored urban garden, and support for young refugees in Darfur. To read about the 2011 recipients and their projects, go to www.jewishfed.org/community/page/meet-tikkun-olam-award-winners. Scroll to the bottom of the page to look at previous year recipients. You'll be amazed when you read their stories and learn what they've accomplished.

The Society for the Advancement of Judaism (SAJ) provides a list of organizations (see www.thesaj.org/tikkun-olam/tikun-olam-making-a-difference) involved in *tikkun olam*, such as Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger, which prevents and alleviates hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds (www.mazon.org).

United Synagogue Youth (USY) supports *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah*. USY actively raises funds for their Tikkun Olam Program, as we've seen our TBA USYers do. For information on how they use and allocate the funds, see www.usy.org/yourusy/sato/tikun_olam/.



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For something fun, surf over to YouTube and join the cast of Shalom Sesame as they sing about *tikkun olam* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-uxS_HfUac). "We help the world when we help someone!"

Tzedakah, Inc. maintains a Web site (www.just-tzedakah.org) where they rate charities on transparency and provide guidelines for *tzedakah*, as well as how to evaluate charities before giving. Be sure to check out their page on Tzedakah in Jewish Tradition to read about what Jewish sages say about *tzedakah*. Did you know the word *v'natnu* ("and they will give"), is a palindrome in Hebrew? See Exodus, 30:12. *V'natnu*, if it is written backwards, is also *v'natnu*, to "tell you that whatever a person gives to *tzedakah* will return to him, and he will not lack anything because of it."

Check out these Web sites and get inspired! Create your own project, start one with friends, or donate to one that's meaningful for you. Share with TBA about your project, and have fun!



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