



## ALL OF ME: A BOOK OF THANKS

Written by Molly Bang

Illustrated by Molly Bang

*From fine feet and grand hands to hearing ears and a thumping heart, this book teaches children (and reminds adults) to enjoy a sense of gratitude as part of the family in this big, amazing world.*

Each baby who arrives in our world, with every tiny eyelash and miniature nose, reminds us of a powerful Jewish concept: *b'tzelem Elohim*. This precept tells us that every human being is created in God's image. Every child's unique characteristics—those we can see and those that are tucked away in the heart—carry a divine spark. Regardless of our spiritual or religious viewpoints, we observe babies and children and think: miracle.

### IN GOD'S IMAGE

In *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), practical and moral teachings of ancient Jewish sages, we find: "Rabbi Akiba would say, 'Beloved is humanity for we were made in the image of God. And we are especially beloved, for God made it known to us that we are made in His image.'"

We may wonder about—even struggle with—what being "made in God's image" signifies. The answers will be different for different people, but the finest clues will undoubtedly appear in the faces of those little beings we read to each evening. Sharing your thankfulness for their lives will help lead your children to their own ways of expressing gratitude.

### PAINTED FOOTPRINTS

While little listeners of *All of Me!* may be too young to fully participate in the artistic ideas included at the back of this book, you can initiate an activity for which you will all later be grateful. The proverbial brightly colored hand- or footprint is a treasure to parents as the years go by. Consider making it an annual event to repeat this painting activity—perhaps on your child's birthday or in the autumn around the time of *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year.

Make each print on paper large enough to enable you to write notes about those attributes of your youngster for which you are most thankful. As children grow, they will enjoy hearing even the smallest details of all the love and gratitude you have felt for them since the day they joined your family. Pj

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