



ALL THE WORLD

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As this lovely book reminds us, the world is filled with beautiful things – big and small. The trick is to remember to take note of them.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

The children in this quiet book appreciate simple pleasures: gathering rocks on the beach, harvesting ripe tomatoes, the act of climbing a tree and witnessing the splendor of the world around them. Research shows that taking time to be grateful for all the good in your life makes you happier – and there’s no better time to do so than at Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Before we take stock of our many blessings, first we have to notice them! That may be why *hakarat hatov*, “noticing the good,” is a deeply held Jewish value at Rosh Hashanah and all year round. Seeing the wonders of the everyday world is a special talent of young children, who approach their environment with fresh eyes. When passing babies “from neck to knee,” we slow down and take note of the miracles all around us – our children chief among them.

Noticing the good does not mean ignoring everything else. Rain falls; buckets spill. “All the world goes round this way,” and that’s why it’s everyone’s responsibility to take part in *tikkun olam*, the project of repairing the world. The world is big, but small acts of *tikkun olam* – offering a helping hand, providing a hot meal to travelers, even joining others in song – can help make the world a better place, for all of us.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

The habit of *hakarat hatov*, noticing the good, makes for what might be called an “attitude of gratitude.” There’s a Jewish tradition of saying 100 *brachot* (Hebrew for “blessings”) every day – upon waking up, before washing hands, at mealtimes, and many, many other times as well. Assuming one sleeps eight hours a day, that means noticing something good about every ten minutes!

Another way to practice *hakarat hatov* would be to make a simple list. Hang a whiteboard in the kitchen and encourage children to ask you to write down “good things” as they occur to them. You can also carry a special notebook and jot items down when you and your kids are out and about. You might be surprised at how quickly they add up by the end of the day! At dinnertime, everyone in the family can talk about their favorite good things that happened that day.

Noticing the good can be tricky during challenging times, but it can be especially comforting at those times, too. As parents, we encourage emotional honesty in our children, helping them name when they feel frustrated, sad, or angry. But we can also help them see that even when things are difficult, there are still reasons to be grateful.