



ART-MAKING
as a FORM of PRAYER and
NERVOUS SYSTEM
REGULATION



A Note from October/November 2023

The scale of what is happening, and what we are witnessing, is beyond words. We are frayed, overwhelmed, activated, scared, outraged, confused, grief-stricken, horrified and more. Present day violence reaches back to touch in on past traumas. Everyone activated and on edge.

We who can must continue to stay connected to that place of creativity inside us, to stay connected to our hearts, to Source, to each other.

So that we do not act in the world from that place of activation.
So that we can become interrupters of cycles of violence in big and small ways.
So that we can keep open the channel to the vivid potentialities of our imagination.

What if we allow this moment to remake us?

Not to harden or calcify, ossify or entrench, but to make ourselves softer, more supple, more loving, and widen our sense of kinship and connection? We open our hearts so that we can become interrupters of cycles of violence in big and small ways, so that we can hear the voice of our conscience.

This is a vital act of resistance and resilience, to continue to envision and see as possible new worlds, new ways of being, new ways of supporting, of connecting and of making change.

In Jewish tradition, in times of crisis and uncertainty, we turn to the words of Psalms, words that hold every human emotion. The following prompts offer a creative practice to allow our softened hearts to guide our actions.

Yours in creativity,

**Rabbi Adina Allen,
Jewish Studio Project**

PROMPT 1

אֵין אִמֶּר וְאֵין דְּבָרִים

Ain omer, v'ein d'varim

**There is no utterance,
there are no words.**

Psalm 19:4

Take any art materials you have on hand (pen, paper, instrument, your own body), and explore the following questions as you move freely for 15 minutes in creative process.

- *Of what can you not speak?*
- *What feelings, questions, longings exist beyond words?*
- *What happens when words fall away?*



PROMPT 2

בְּקֹר אֶעֱרַךְ לְךָ וְאַצְפֶּה

Boker, e'erach-l'cha, va'a'tzapeh

**At daybreak I plead before You,
and wait.**

Psalm 5:4

Take any art materials you have on hand (pen, paper, instrument, your own body), and explore the following questions as you move freely for 15 minutes in creative process.

- *For what do you wait?*
- *How wide can you open the aperture of our hearts to expand who is included in our plea?*



PROMPT 3

זֶה דֹר דֹרְשָׁב

Zeh dor dorshav

(May) this be the generation that seeks You.

Psalm 24:6

Take any art materials you have on hand (pen, paper, instrument, your own body), and explore the following questions as you move freely for 15 minutes in creative process.

- *From generation to generation, l'dor va'dor we say. What if this were the generation to heal the seemingly intractable within ourselves? Within the world?*
- *In this moment, what does it mean to you to "seek" the Divine?*



PROMPT 4

עַד־אַנָּה ... יִגֹּן בְּלִבִּי יוֹמָם

Ad ana... yagon bil'vavi yomam

**How long will there be grief
in my heart all day?**

Psalm 13:3

Take any art materials you have on hand (pen, paper, instrument, your own body), and explore the following questions as you move freely for 15 minutes in creative process.

- *What shape does your grief take?*
- *What shape was it yesterday?*
- *How might tomorrow transform your grief?*
- *When you open fully to your grief, what other feelings emerge?*



PROMPT 5

וּבַחֵן לִבּוֹת וְכִלְיוֹת

U'vochen libot u'chlayot

**God probes the heart
and conscience.**

Psalm 7:10

Take any art materials you have on hand (pen, paper, instrument, your own body), and explore the following questions as you move freely for 15 minutes in creative process.

- *What happens when you search, truly, honestly, into your heart?*
- *When you ask your conscience what it has to say and open yourself to listen?*

