



Herbert Bearman Campus  
Jewish Museum  
of Maryland  
An agency of The Associated

ADAR

# ADAR

Adar א (I): February 8-March 9, 2024

Adar ב (II): March 9-April 8, 2024

This is the eighth edition of a monthly zine by the Jewish Museum of Maryland. In each issue, we share content about the holidays, rituals, and ideas related to the current month in the Jewish calendar.

This month's zine focuses on the Hebrew month of Adar.

You can pick up physical copies of the zine in the Lombard and Lloyd Library. Lombard and Lloyd Library is located on the grassy corner of the JMM campus at the intersection of Lombard and Lloyd Streets.

We hope to provide space for people at the JMM and beyond to share their thoughts and creations as they relate to where we are in the Hebrew calendar.



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5784 is a leap year in the Hebrew calendar, also known as a shana me'uberet, or a pregnant year.

Months in the Jewish calendar are based on the cycle of the moon and are shorter than months in the Gregorian calendar, which is based on the cycle of the sun. Most Jewish years are 353-355 days long rather than 365.25 days, as most Gregorian years are.

To address the misalignment of the lunar and solar years, every two or three years, a leap year with an additional month is incorporated into the Hebrew calendar.

During a leap year, the month of Adar becomes Adar א, and Adar ב, also known as Adar I and Adar II. א (alef) and ב (beis) are the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and have the numerical values of 1 and 2 respectively.

Adar is known as the month in which we increase in joy, and this year we get double the joy! This month's zine is dedicated to joy, fun, and laughter.

*How are you cultivating joy?*

*What are your obstacles to feeling joy?*

*Who are you sharing joy with?*

# WHATS THE MATH OF A LEAP YEAR?

The Hebrew calendar is based on a 19-year cycle. This is the number of years that it takes for the moon cycles to return to the exact same place within the solar cycle.

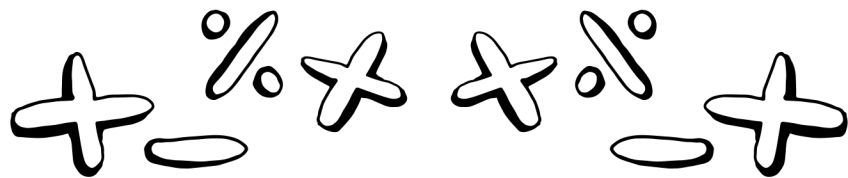
Within that cycle, there are 12 non-leap years, called peshuta or “simple,” and 7 leap or me’uberet years.

Me’uberet years are numbers 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19. In order to figure out when the next leap year will occur, we have to figure out which part of the cycle we are in.

## This is where the math comes in:

- Take the number of the year
- Divide it by 19
- The remainder is the year of the cycle

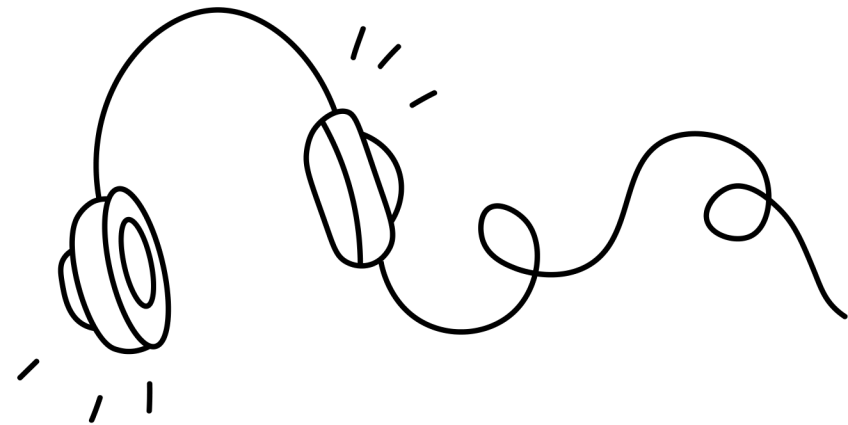
Try doing this equation with 5784 and check your math with the answers which can be found on the last page of the zine.



# ADAR PLAYLIST:

Listening to a good song is a great way to boost the joy in any room. Enjoy these tunes picked out by JMM staff.

- “Solar Power” by Lorde
- “Asleep on a Sunbeam” by Belle and Sebastian
- “Jumpin’ Jack” by Elizabeth Cotten
- “Do Your Thing” by Moondog
- “Every Time We Touch” by Cascada
- “Lost In Your Light” by Dua Lipa feat. Miguel
- “Don’t Wait” by Mapei
- “TUCUTUM” by Marina Satti
- “One Thing” by Bad Moves
- “Good Name” by William Onyeabor



# PURIM PICS!

During a leap year, the Jewish holiday Purim always falls on the full moon of Adar Bet. Purim is celebrated with costumes, puppets, groggers (noisemakers), and a creative performance called a spiel, which means play in Yiddish.

The Purim spiel is traditionally a performance that retells the Purim story from the biblical Book of Esther while providing commentary on current events.

Check out these Purim photos from the JMM Collections:



Ira Levy gets ready for "Pre-school Purim," March 1977. Photo by Sam Edlavitch, Jewish Community Center Collection, JMM 2006.13.1088.



Flea market table at the 1987 Purim Carnival. Pictured are Shelby Gilden, JCC Chairman, and Ms. Hirsh. Gift of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore, JMM 2006.13.307.

# THE PLANTS OF PURIM

In Isaiah 55:13, we read,

*“Instead of the brier, a cypress shall rise;  
Instead of the nettle, a myrtle shall rise...”*

This line is referenced in Talmudic commentary on the main characters from the Purim story. Let’s look closely at each of these plant associations:

Briar as Haman

Cypress as Mordechai

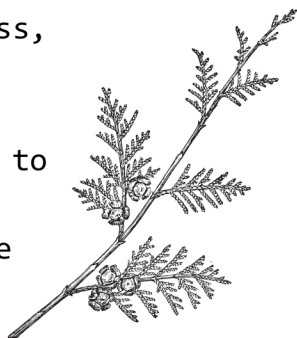
Nettle as Vashti

Myrtle as Esther



Haman is the Purim story’s main antagonist. He is evil, self-serving, and is ultimately defeated. Briar is the common name for a number of different plants that are thorny and form thickets, including blackberry and rose bushes. The thorniness of briars make them apt stand-ins for Haman.

Mordechai is compared to cypress, a strong and evergreen tree associated with memory. In the Purim story, we know Mordechai to be a wise, trustworthy, and righteous cousin to Esther, the story’s main protagonist.



The Purim story champions Esther, who is known to have the Hebrew name, Hadassah, which literally translates to myrtle. Esther is an icon of courage, righteousness, and bravery. There are many interpretations of why the Myrtle plant is representative of Esther, one of them being that myrtles do not dry out in the summer or winter, making them righteous and strong against adversity.

Vashti is the queen who refuses to entertain guests at her husband, King Ahashverosh’s feast and is dethroned and banished. Vashti traditionally has been depicted as vain and wicked but modern readers have reclaimed her as a



feminist hero with fierce boundaries and inner strength. She is compared to nettle, a prickly plant that can sting at first encounters. Nettles are often overlooked because of their sharp exterior, but with a deeper understanding, they are an extremely healing plant.

# MAKE SOME NOISE!

Check out this large wooden grogger (noisemaker for Purim) from the JMM Collections.

Grogger (גראָגער) is a Yiddish term for a percussive noise maker that is played when the name “Haman” is mentioned during the public reading of the Book of Esther.

This specific grogger is made from solid wood pieces, c. 1900. It was found in the basement of a Highlandtown rowhouse.



JMM 1999.162.1

This grogger is also made of wood but has a curvier silhouette with rounded edges and finishes.



JMM 1987.130.020

## LEAP YEAR MATH ANSWER:

5784 divided by 19 is 304, with a remainder of 8.

This means we are in year eight of the 304th 19-year cycle since the beginning of the Hebrew calendar.