

Headlights

"EACH ONE'S PRECIOUS"

Winter 2014

Vol. 6, No. 3

SHINING LIGHTS: JEWISH EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE WITH CHALLENGES

LIGHTS OF *Freedom*

INNER

OUTER

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Editorial

The Inner and Outer Light of Redemption

Chanukah. It's all about light. Eight little dancing flames, powerful lights of endurance and hope.

Driving down our street, about an hour into the cold, dark December night, a simple scene, breathtaking in its understated beauty, can be seen. In many windows, the blinds are open. Sitting on the window sill, there's a lit menorah, a glow. Those tiny, unadorned flames are compelling, something about them pierces the blackness, creating an aura of warmth, power, majesty.

But they're just slim candles or little cups of olive oil with a wick floating on top. What about them magnetically draws my gaze? Those little flames symbolize the deep inner light of our neshama, our soul, a light that can never be extinguished, no matter how much we may mess up. They symbolize G-d's deep light, invested in His beloved creation, sustaining our world, waiting for us to properly cherish it. Exile means these lights are hidden; redemption means these lights are shining in all their glorious illumination.

Jews and menorahs—the Chanukah thing; a light that can never be extinguished. Through bitter Soviet winters, brutal and horrific concentration camp, through Inquisition and exile, we lit them, even if furtively assembled with saved scraps of margarine and twine. They not only symbolize our soul— they tickle, they awake our souls, the menorah lights help us feel our soul's enduring power, its ability to light up even the darkest night.

The menorah is placed in the doorway, or the window. It's not enough to light up ourselves. We have the ability and the responsibility to light up the night, to venture out into the public realm and let our radiant light shine. Chanukah reminds us, we can light up the deepest recesses of our own darkness and struggle, and we all have light to give, to share. Our tiny flames are indeed

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About JEEP

Jewish Education for Every Person

OUR VISION: A Jewish community in which **every person** has access to our spiritual inheritance and can use it to reach his or her full potential.

OUR MISSION: To help local people with special needs access Jewish education and connections to empower them to better overcome their life challenges.

JEEP SERVES:

- **Children** and youth with learning and other challenges
- **Seniors** in nursing homes and those who are homebound
- **Adults** with disabilities
- **Patients** in hospitals
- **Alcoholics and addicts** wishing to obtain or maintain recovery using Jewish spiritual tools and support

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powerful. And enduring.

So, this Chanukah, be warmed by your soul, feed its flame with soul fuel, with mitzvot. Learn a little Torah. Do another mitzvah. And let your powerful light shine up someone else's night— give, share, connect.

No matter how thick the darkness of exile seems today (could today's headlines really be worse than yesterday's?), we can and we must, transform our world, into a place of shining warmth and light, a place of redemption. One candle at a time, one person at a time, a child, a senior, an individual who is ill, has disabilities or is struggling in some other way. Or maybe just your own child, your mom, your friend or your neighbor who needs an extra hug, an encouraging smile or a simple favor.

The ever-increasing light of Chanukah prepares me, you, us and the whole world to greet Moshiach, very, very soon. A time when the darkness itself will be transformed into light, completely and permanently.

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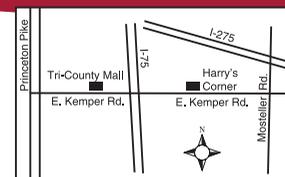
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JEEP News

Halom House- creating up a storm, celebrating Our Heroes and more...

The Halom House (Jewish residence and housing network for adults with disabilities, based in Blue Ash) residents have had many opportunities to express their wonderful creative and artistic skills during the last few months, during their twice weekly learning and craft sessions with JEEP, sponsored entirely by the Jewish Federation.

The residents worked together to make a sukkah panel for the community sukkah at the Mayerson JCC, answering the question, "What is a hero?" They brainstormed their definition of a hero, coming up with examples and descriptions, including, Superman, brave, nice, kind, Spiderman, Wonder woman, strong, and caring. Several residents colored pictures of their personal heroes and the banner letters, and everyone had a great time filling the large panel with all kinds of sequins and decorative stickers. A festive atmosphere filled the air as we all worked together, with much joking and companionship.

During Sukkot, the residents joined JEEP at the JCC to view the panels and enjoy a special hero presentation and concert the CSO String Quartet, which was exciting and enriching.

Other activities have included cake and challah baking, making Noah's ark and rainbow, learning several letters of the Alef-Bet and many other holiday and Torah portion crafts, songs, and good times. We're also learning about the mitzvot of love and tolerance and developing stronger relationships with our friends.

Halom House Shabbos program...

Every Friday afternoon for the past nine years, JEEP has delighted Halom House residents with a welcome-the-Shabbos program. As residents come in from a long week of work and activity, Rabbi Fuss is there to greet them with the restful and refreshing world of Shabbos. With the help of staff and residents, everyone enjoys lighting Shabbos candles, a special taste of challah and grape juice at the dining room table, spread with a beautiful white table cloth and other Shabbos settings. We say the blessings, sing songs,



hear a Jewish story or just schmooze in an atmosphere of friendship and warmth. At Halom House each week, the dream ("halom") of a peaceful Shabbos world becomes reality.

Cincinnati Jewish Recovery: New Overeater's Anonymous Meeting for Women...

JEEP is happy to announce the formation of a new OA meeting for Women. The group meets every Monday evening, at 7:00 PM, at the Arthur Schreiber Jewish Education Center, 1995 Section Road. Visitors may park in the back of the building and enter through the back door, if they wish. The meeting, by and for women, is guided by women with quality recovery from overeating or similar issues. The group's goal is to create a warm, non-judgmental and supportive community where we can share our "strength, experience and hope."

Cincinnati has many tools for those struggling with overeating issues: doctors, therapists, weight-loss and maintenance programs, the Mayerson JCC and other fitness centers. We hope this OA group will add the important element of spiritual and personal support, of like-minded peers who understand the unique relationship we Jewish women have with food. All women are welcome.

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Formation of other related or similar groups

JEEP would be happy to host similar groups for men or for both men and women at the Arthur Schreiber Jewish Education Center or to help organize groups meeting at other locations: Individuals struggling with overeating, alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, etc. Please contact Rabbi Karp or Miriam Karp.

Weekly Jewish Recovery Meeting for men and women dealing with any addiction or related problems

JEEP also hosts a Jewish Recovery Meeting on Thursday nights at 7:00 PM for individuals in recovery or trying to obtain recovery from any addiction or related problem. The meeting is similar to AA meetings except that the readings and discussions focus on Jewish spiritual tools which are tailored for use by individuals with addictions and similar or related problems. All are welcome.

Cincinnati Jewish Recovery Shabbos and holiday celebrations

Cincinnati Jewish Recovery, CJR, invites anyone dealing with addictions, similar or related problems to our regularly scheduled Sober Shabbos celebrations, where delicious homemade food, friendship, laughter, recovery talk and camaraderie are shared. We meet the first and third Friday night of the month, the first Friday in the Karp home, and the third Friday at the Arthur Schreiber Jewish Education Center, with a large and appreciative crowd enjoying Bubby's chicken soup, etc. Parking and entry are also available in the rear of the building. Schedule may be adjusted due to holidays and other factors. Contact us for details.

Cincinnati Jewish Recovery monthly celebrations

Cincinnati Jewish Recovery celebrated Sukkot, enjoying a Bagel Brunch in the sukkah with a generous spread of quality recovery inspiration and sharing. More recently, a "regular" Shabbos was celebrated in the "off month" between Sukkot and Chanukah. Eighteen individuals crowded around the tables enjoying a Shabbos meal, stories, songs and strengthening ourselves and one other in our recovery.

And coming up: Cincinnati Jewish Recovery Chanukah party: Sunday, Dec. 20, 7:00 PM

At the Arthur Schreiber Jewish Education Center: latkes, giant menorah lighting, dreidels, songs and all the goodies, both material and spiritual. We will discuss Chanukah's meaningful recovery message.

BeFriend a Senior

The Gertrude Schechter Holiday Visitation Program, thanks to the generous support of Nancy Schechter, Vice President, New York Mellon Bank, enabled JEEP to bring the joy and reflection of the High Holiday and Sukkos season to approximately 200 individuals who are patients in hospitals or residents of nursing homes and other senior facilities—or homebound. Armed with gifts, honey cake, shofar blowing (when appropriate), lulav and esrog and other holiday essentials, Rabbi Fuss and his volunteers brought the holidays to those who couldn't access them alone. If you would like to volunteer and add some light to the life of a senior who may be lonely, frail, ill, and/or bored, please contact Rabbi Karp or Rabbi Fuss.

Children and youth

Last year JEEP worked with 22 children and youth with various challenges or disabilities. Judaism is the inheritance of each one of us and children and youth are our future. When a child has significant challenges or disabilities, he or she may be unable or less able to access the wonderful resources of his or her Jewish heritage. Helping a child to be involved in something Jewish, especially on a regular basis, is a lifelong and infinitely precious gift—a true game-changer. This past summer, JEEP enabled a child to attend a great local Jewish day camp, strengthen Jewish identity, make solid friendships with campers and lasting relationships with young adult mentors (counselors). An entire life can be positively impacted by such an experience.

Individuals who are patients in hospitals

Rabbi Fuss visits approximately 75 individuals in hospitals each month. A warm, friendly, short and sweet visit which can uplift, comfort, strengthen or inform patients as well as family and friends can make a difference like night and day. Rabbi Fuss is on the hospital route almost daily, traversing the city and spreading a light of encouragement, empathy and comfort. JEEP also tends to Jewish patients at Summit Behavioral Center, visiting on the units each week.



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Recovery Profile

*Getting through the bumps:
A Shmooze with David B.*

David B. is a fun guy. The kind that makes you smile, full of good humor, a lively smile and engaging laugh. A talented and hard-working engineer, David is also in recovery from addiction to narcotics. He has been involved with JEEP for about four years. David shares some of his story, recovery insights, and path.

How did you meet Rabbi Karp and JEEP?

I met Yaakov in the Cincinnati Community Kollel, where I go occasionally to study Torah. I was talking about recovery, since I'm very open about it, and someone said, "Talk to that guy, he's very involved in it." I'd been looking for someone I could connect with, get spiritual guidance from someone who understood recovery, and —there he was, someone taking a leadership role and giving support in such an important area.

What's your relationship like?

Rabbi Karp is as much a friend as a teacher; he's the kind of guy you can talk with. I find the key to life is developing relationships with someone you can count on to get you through the bumps, because those bumps can really throw you off. The kind of guy who doesn't just talk the talk, he walks the walk. When you meet someone like that, it helps set you straight. Talking with him helps me restart, rekindle my faith, which is a never ending struggle to maintain.

You now live and work a few hours south of Cincinnati, and travel a lot. How has that changed your relationship?

I'm in more contact with Rabbi Karp than any of the rabbis and religious guys in my area. With most of them, I don't feel like they really have the time for me. Whenever I call Rabbi Karp, he always makes time and makes me feel like a priority. I'm very grateful for that.

Tell us more about your addiction, and subsequent recovery.

I've evolved spiritually, and am still growing and changing. I was the guy who doubted everything, with an agnostic background. Now I'm living a life of really believing that G-d has a purpose, a plan for me, and that there are angels out there helping me.

This is really significant for recovery. I went from seeing my value in the universe as less than zero, with zero faith. Ten years ago I never would have seen myself as a guy trying to get some time for prayer into my day. Faith is so central to recovery, to get out of your self, to see the bigger picture. Without faith you quickly go back to the same old, same old.

The first breakthrough in recovery, after a ten year slide into heavy narcotic use, was when I met up with some rabbis, who got me to go to some special places to pray with them. That seemed to turn the tide—afterwards was the first time I had a long and

significant stretch of recovery. I started doing drugs in the early '90's, when I was in college, and continued until 2000. Since then, I've been clean, thank G-d.

What keeps you going, and not relapsing?

Believe it or not, the shining light of people in recovery is the opportunity to develop a relationship with G-d, which is a paradox. Had I not gone down that road, of getting addicted, had I not gone down to those depths, I never would have had the need to have that type of deep connection with G-d.

Is it hard traveling a lot, as you do

in your work, and being out in the business world but having to maintain your sobriety and connection to spirituality?

Being out on the road fits my personality. I'm a wanderer, an adventurer. I enjoy seeing new places and people. Looking back at my addiction, after about ten years clean, thank G-d, you look back and almost wonder how you got into that garbage in the first place. It seems like it was a different person. I was in a tough period, I was lost. I'm now more centered in who I am- I know what makes me work. But being around the Karp's has made me change my goal. My dream is to now have what they have, to settle down, have a wonderful family to come home to, to play with my kids.

Any advice for young people just curious about the drug experience?

You barely have to dabble in the drugs, before you're hooked. Almost no one can dabble with it. The stuff out there today is so powerful. That's why many drug dealers give out free samples. Try a little, and then they've got you. Once you're hooked, the nicest people will do more and more, steal, lie, whatever it takes to satisfy that increasing desire.

I was fortunate to be able to discover recovery, to let down my guard and get help and learn to open up to spirituality. I have friends who know they have about one year to live, friends in their late thirties and forties, who've destroyed their bodies.

I heard that 1 person dies every 15 minutes from a heroin overdose in the US. Heroin addiction has skyrocketed, up 500% in the last year, to an epidemic proportion.

What should we be doing as a society?

It's shocking that there are not nearly enough people out there like Rabbi Karp, doing his kind of work. Society chooses to turn the other eye. They're even legalizing what for many turns into a gateway drug. I'm very grateful for people like Rabbi Karp, out there doing the battle, opening the door to connection and recovery for us.

**YOU BARELY HAVE TO
DABBLE IN THE DRUGS
BEFORE, BOOM!
YOU'RE HOOKED**



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Children with Challenges: Handicaps

By Jill Pincus

A close friend has a child who is confined to a wheelchair. Yet despite the ongoing accommodations the family must make, a guest in their home doesn't notice the child's limitations. The focus is always on the child's considerable intelligence and assets. Recently while interacting with their child in another setting, I was shocked to encounter the full weight of the child's physical limitations. This family has created a home in the deepest sense of the word, providing their child with a refuge from the limiting experiences he faces out in the world.

I was shocked to encounter the full weight of the child's physical limitations.

This family's model is one we must all seek to emulate in the home we provide for our children, a home that is a refuge, where children can escape from the relentless onslaught of limiting and confidence-destroying experiences they will continually face in the world as an inescapable part of the process known formally as gaining an education, or colloquially, growing up.

As a child I believed I sang very well. This assumption was never threatened until I auditioned for my junior high choir. After that audition, I have never tried for another singing role, nor do I ever intend to. I learned that I was not "a singer." The audition narrowed my self-concept, causing me to see myself as more limited than I had previously believed. Yet in the safety of grandmother's home, the singer still within me dared to emerge, and I gave spontaneous performances to my grandmother and great-aunt, who never let on with the slightest word or gesture that these performances were anything less than Broadway quality. At school, I was limited

as a singer, but in my grandmother's home, I was free of those limitations. Their home was my refuge.

**WE CAN
CHOOSE
TO CREATE A REFUGE
FOR OUR CHILDREN**

All of us have some sort of handicap or limitation. There are children who can't sit still, who do not enjoy reading, who are disorganized, children with learning disabilities, struggling to understand basic concepts while their siblings race through advanced understanding. Some children run slowly or clumsily, some get picked last in team sports, or always drop the ball.

There are children with physical limitations, whose handicaps are obvious at first glance. Yet others may be deeply limited and scarred, because there is no place to escape the relentless tsunami of criticism that continually threatens them. In my work as a therapist, I have come to also view these children as handicapped, but their handicaps are much harder to detect and treat, because they are hidden deep within the recesses of their souls.

Our children are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, just as they are aware of their own bodies, but they do not have to grant them the same importance that we do. They do not necessarily see them as limitations that have the power to prevent them from recognizing their dreams. Whereas adults define themselves by who they are and what they can reasonably accomplish, children define themselves by their dreams.

As parents, we have a choice. We can choose to suspend our awareness of the hard realities of life, that slow runners do not become baseball stars, clumsy girls do not become ballerinas, in order to nurture our children's developing sense of self, and



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preserve their sense of being an unlimited soul, only defined by the power of its own dreams, for as long as possible.

We can choose to create a refuge for our children. We can choose to create a home that further reinforces the limiting experiences they receive in the world, that spotlights their shortcomings and the areas where they don't measure up, where criticism is freely and frequently dispensed; or we can choose to create a refuge for our children, a home where they can escape from the pressing



confinement of their limits, where they don't need to measure up, because they are cherished for who they are, and for being part of our family.

As parents, our choice is not dependent upon the type or severity of our children's limitations. On the contrary, it's often the parents of those with the most severe limitations create the best refuges, like my friend has created for her child. The choice then is not dependent upon our children. Rather the choice depends purely on us.

Reprinted and adapted from The Jewish Woman.org

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Chanukah in the Gulag

*Determined Light in the Face
of the Darkest Obstacles*

By Natan Sharansky

*May we gain inspiration to stand tall to all our opponents,
inner and outer*

The holiday of Chanukah was approaching. At the time, I was the only Jew in the prison zone, but when I explained that Chanukah was a holiday of national freedom, of returning to one's own culture in the face of forced assimilation, my friends decided to celebrate it with me.

They even made me a wooden menorah, decorated it, and found some candles.

I began to insist. "In two days Chanukah will be over and then I'll return this 'state property' to you. Now, however, this looks like an attempt to deny me the opportunity of celebrating Jewish holidays."

The duty officer began hesitating. Then he phoned his superior and got his answer: "A camp is not a synagogue. We won't permit Sharansky to pray here."

I was surprised by the bluntness of that remark, and immediately declared a hunger strike. In a statement to the



In the evening I lit the first candle and recited a prayer that I had composed for this occasion. Tea was poured, and I began to describe the heroic struggle of the Maccabees to save their people...

On each of the subsequent evenings of Chanukah I took out my menorah, lit the candles, and recited the appropriate blessing. Then I blew out the candles, as I didn't have any extras.

On the sixth night of Chanukah the authorities confiscated my menorah with all my candles. "The candlesticks were made from state materials; this is illegal. You could be punished for this alone and the other prisoners are afraid you'll start a fire."

procurator general I protested against the violation of my national and religious rights, and against KGB interference in my personal life.

I was summoned to Major Osin's office two days later, in the evening.

Osin, the camp commander, was an enormous, flabby man of around 50, with small eyes and puffy eyelids, a master of intrigue.

Osin pulled a benevolent smile over his face as he tried to talk me out of my hunger strike. Osin promised to see to it personally that in the future nobody would hinder me from praying.

"Then what's the problem?" I said. "Give me back the

menorah, as tonight is the last evening of Chanukah. Let me celebrate it now, and taking into account your assurances for the future, I shall end the hunger strike.”

Osin thought it over and promptly the confiscated menorah appeared from his desk “I need eight candles,” I said. (In fact I needed nine, but when it came to Jewish

**A CAMP IS NOT A
SYNAGOGUE.
WE WON'T PERMIT
SHARANSKY TO PRAY HERE.**

rituals I was still a novice.) Then Osin took out a handsome inlaid pocketknife and deftly cut me eight candles.

I arranged the candles and went to the coat rack for my hat, explaining to Osin that “during the prayer you must stand with your head covered and at the end say ‘Amen.’” He put on his major’s hat and stood. I lit the candles and recited my own prayer in Hebrew, which went something like this: “Blessed are You, God, for allowing me to rejoice on this day of Chanukah, the holiday of our liberation, the holiday of our return to the way of our fathers. Blessed are You, God, for allowing me to light these candles. May you allow me to light the Chanukah candles many times in

your city, Jerusalem, with my wife, Avital, and my family and friends.”

This time, however, inspired by the sight of Osin standing meekly at attention, I added in Hebrew: “And may the day come when all our enemies, who today are planning our destruction, will stand before us and hear our prayers and say ‘Amen.’”

“Amen,” Osin echoed back. He sighed with relief, sat down and removed his hat. For some time we looked silently at the burning candles. They quickly melted, and the hot wax was spread pleasantly over the glass surface of the table. Then Osin caught himself, summoned his aide, and brusquely ordered him to clean it up.

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