

The Hinda Herald

June 2023 Issue



The bulletin written by our Hinda Family for our Hinda Family.

Read ahead to find more about:

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Dvar Torah

The month of Sivan and the Rebbe's arrival in America

The Rebbe's Arrival in America and how Torah is to be found in our challenges.

Our current month, Sivan, has the distinction of being the month of Matan Torah, the Giving of the Torah. The revelation at Sinai was the moment that the People of Israel became a nation chosen by G-d to carry out a divine mission intrinsic to the very purpose of creation. As such, it is the greatest, most significant event in our history, when we attained the loftiest heights as a people, the only nation on Earth to experience G-d's revelation en masse as the direct recipients of G-d's Will and Wisdom.

For such a momentous occasion, certain aspects of our celebration of the event seem peculiar. The reading from the prophets (the Haftorah) for the holiday is the vision of Ezekiel. At first glance it would seem appropriate to read of that tremendous revelation of G-dliness on the day of the Revelation at Sinai but a closer look uncovers that this vision was shown to the prophet shortly before the destruction of Solomon's temple and the 70 year exile that followed, with aspects of that vision indicative of that imminent destruction and exile. Moreover, Isaiah's vision, we are taught, was a higher revelation (from the level of B'ri'ah) and Ezekiel's was of a lower nature (from the level of Yetzirah). Why was this reading chosen over that of Isaiah?

More recent events give us a clue. On the 28th of Sivan (June 23rd), in 1941, the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin arrived safely in the United States from the horrors of Europe. That rescue is itself cause for celebration, yet there's an aspect of it that may seem less so. The Rebbe refers to the Western Hemisphere as the Lower Hemisphere, with the Eastern Hemisphere being the higher one, since that's the hemisphere where the Revelation at Sinai took place. If so, the Rebbe's arrival in America is, although a rescue, also a descent. Yet, that very descent is celebrated.

The number 28 is the numerical value of the Hebrew word ko'ach, which means "power" or "strength". The 28th day of the month of the Giving of the Torah represents the "Power of the Torah", and that power is most revealed specifically in the lowest of circumstances. The Torah was given to elevate and transform the world, to realize the purpose of creation. In order to raise something up, the lowest level of that thing must be included or be left behind, and in raising up that level, all the higher levels are likewise elevated. The Rebbe's arrival in the Lower Hemisphere, and his work from there encompassing the entire globe, is very much the point from which the "power of the Torah" is brought to bear.

So, to, for each and every one of us in our personal lives. No matter how trying the circumstances that we find ourselves may be, those very circumstances are where the power of the Torah is most revealed and is part and parcel of the elevation of the entire world, culminating with the True and Complete Redemption with our righteous Moshiach, immediately, now!

UPCOMING

Courses

We are running several online courses to help you build critical skills post-incarceration this year.

"Crime and Consequences" with Rahmiel Hayyim Drizin, Esq.: June 28, July 5, 12, 19 - An innovative Jewish perspective on conviction, sentencing and criminal rehabilitation.

"Manage your Finances for Success - Post Incarceration" with Joel Keyser: August 30, Sept 6, 13-This comprehensive course is specifically designed to empower individuals who have experienced incarceration to develop the essential financial skills and knowledge necessary for a successful and sustainable future.

"Teshuva: Forgiveness from Society, G-d, and Myself?" with Rabbi Manis Friedman: September 21 & 28- In this transformative course, we will explore the theme of forgiveness and its significance in the journey of post-incarceration redemption. We will delve into introspective questions such as, "can my victims forgive me?" and "can I forgive myself?" We also examine the role of family and society in the process of forgiveness and reintegration. We will discuss the concept of return and restoration, examining how to rediscover our identity, values, and aspirations. Enroll today and embark on a transformative journey of self-renewal, personal growth, and restoration.

Controversies in Criminal Justice: A Sociological Perspective" with Dr. Edna Eres: October 11, 18, 25, November 1, 8- Laws and Justice - Making laws why/how are laws made, what do they address, who do they represent, when do we think that reform is needed etc. Policing Society - police legitimately, police use of force, police role in a democracy society, police abuse of power. Courts - Courts and adjudicating crime. Prisons and other forms of punishments; prison reform, prison abolition. Victims of Crime - special categories of victims (e.g. age, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation); victim in the criminal justice system.

"Legislative Advocacy and Building Relationships with Legislators" with Restore Justice: November 29, December 6- Learn about the legislative process in Illinois and how a bill really becomes a law. Develop skills to navigate Springfield, and build support for issues that matter to you. While our focus is on criminal legal reform, we try to make our training useful for any issue. Dive deeper into the Illinois legislative process and learn to build relationships with your legislators. You will also prepare to meet with your state legislators.

Awareness-raising in the garden: a great success!

HINDA EVENT

Our reporter on the scene, Rifka, covers the recent event at the Botanic Garden covering the issues of mental health and the criminal justice system.

By Rifka

There was naches in the air at Chicago's Botanic Garden on the morning of May 28th as the Hinda Institute hosted its "Let's Break the Cycle: Decriminalizing Mental Health" event. After arriving at the Botanic Gardens' beautiful Burnstein Hall, guests were treated to a buffet of sweets and salads alongside myriad promotional tables with representatives from sister organizations that work to destigmatize mental health, such as Chabad and F.R.E.E of Niles, the Ark, NAMI Chicago, No Shame On U, SHALVA, and author Chaya Rochel Zimmerman. The booths featured a plethora of free resources both for learning about mental health stigma and information on how to access the services directly, not to mention an array of free goodies to help spread the word, such as notebooks, squish balls, bags, clips, and ingeniously, SHALVA's nail file bearing only its name and number with no subtext in case one would want to hide it in a dangerous domestic situation. The people who work and volunteer with these organizations truly never stop working.

Awards began after a brief introduction: David Grosky was honored as the Hinda Hero of the Year; Mary Zukowski as the Evan Maling Mother of the Year; Dr. Stephanie Kutzen as Volunteer of the Year, and CEO of the Ark, Mrs. Marna Goldwin, was saluted as a pioneer in mental health. Each accepted his or her award with grace and provided insight into their particular corner of the mental health justice experience. This was followed by a reading of the Broken Shoulders Project's play "Out of the Box" that honored Dorothea Dix, a mental health pioneer in the 1800s who successfully advocated for awareness and sensitivity regarding the treatment of mentally ill indigent individuals, the treatment of women, and the practice of incarcerating the mentally ill with violent criminals. Rabbi Binyomin Scheiman made his dramatic debut as the narrator of this harrowing tale.

Lastly came the panel on the challenges of mental health in the justice system. Panelists included Mary Zukowsky, RN; Rabbi Scheiman; Rahmiel Drizin, JD; NAMI Chicago's Director of Forensic services, and Dr. Stephanie Kutzen, PhD, LCSW, who gave their opinion on topics such as the importance of supporting medication compliance in the system, antipsychotics, the process of mental health courts, and the role funding plays in the mental health crisis. At the conclusion of the event, guests had time to enjoy more of the treats and approach the panelists and honorees individually before leaving.



Recording available <u>here!</u>

A VISIT FROM RABBI WILSHANSKI-MYSTERIOUS MITZVOT.

May 27, 2023- Our client, Lana, describes the power of a visit and his abounding love and support from the rabbi while she was inside the walls of the carceral state.

Really, how can he do that? Whenever I meet or hear Rabbi, I wonder where his strength and love for Jews comes from, and I still don't have an answer. Really, how can he do that? His life is like a simultaneous chess game on hundreds of chess boards, where one game can be as long as 20 years. The thing is that...those people are innocent people, and every touch with them is a touch with living pain that lasts! There is no demagoguery where one thing is thought, the other is talked about and the third is done, and it only looks like a visit to prisoners, but he is setting up his personal life, to maintain and extend the life of brothers in the fate, and to bring them to the Torah and the Talmud. And only the strongest and most sincere can do it. That is the modus operandi of Rav. He defends what are, in the broadest sense, the values of Jewish life and Jewish civilization. His smile with a touch of naivete, is actually victory over sadness. And, just imagine: while you are thinking about the book you are reading or the drama you have just seen, what would he be thinking about if he was recently in the very hell where time is standing. Where time doesn't move. In the hell, life is in segments: from visit to visit. In such visits, he goes from one end of Illinois to the other, and while he listens to those poor people, those people whose lives are equated with numbers, those survivors who are very often very intelligent and talented, and misunderstood, but who in background had cracks and early childhoods... which is later resulting in failure and victimization. No one asks these people if they did it, and WHY they did it, although is this the most important thing because it determines the essence. Those martyrs live from Rabbi's visit to his next visit... he is bringing them literature, parts of Talmud and Torah so that TIME takes the form of Jewish letters, until their whole world becomes described with those letters. Page 2 of 2 Point is in love to fellow Jew and to Jewishness. Deep and real love. Only this can be reason to dedicate his whole life to such difficult and the holiest mission in the world: protect and save life! In bigger picture, lack of love is the reason for the crack, which is later resulting in crossing "over line". when friends, and often family and community, distance themselves from these poor people, then Rabbi enters his heart, and traveling directly into hell, visiting prisons throughout Illinois. He visits these people, talks to them, brings them literature that means life... and preventing, and does not allow them to spiritually fall. This is the front line: if the spirit fall, the body ultimately goes down the road. It just looks like a visit, but in fact it's much more than that: it's a battle to save those people. Those visits of his are spiritual transfusions that sustain life, restore life and remove self-pity. You understand, life wants to live, but in that hell it is almost impossible. Because dignity was trampled, freedom and all human rights were taken away, just imagine that horror. And what is only left? Well, the spirit. Knowing this, Rabbi goes across the rain, snow, storms and heat to prevent suicides, depression and protect naked life, To be honest, I did see here anything more holy than this. Just think about it, you're not too? I feel great respect and admiration for his commitment. He is holy man in holy mission. I'm surprised he wasn't officially declared a hero with all high honors he deserves.

I was a number in such a hell. Hell is despair in which time stands still and is measured by visits. Yes, time is standing so damned that I escaped into writing, where else? As a writer, I went to important places and looked for inspiration where life or its negation, its most sublime duration took place. I never ran away from the truth, but I really wanted to face it, where it arises, and no matter how pleasant or it was painful. Also, every great literature and great world writers had as their main question the question of good and evil.

This time, I didn't look for inspiration...I was brutally arrested without any explanation and put in immigration prison. We live in specific historical time of changes in which the center of gravity of truth has shifted. Truth and morality become the property of a social or political group, and these are things on which there must be no compromise. Anyway, whenever I meet or hear Rabbi, I wonder where does he get his strength and love for Jews comes from, and I still don't have an answer. Really, how can he do that? -by Lana

THE HINDA INSTITUTE PODCAST LET'S BREAK THE CYCLE

What's Happening?

PRISON / CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- <u>Understanding mass incarceration in the US is</u> <u>the first step to reducing a swollen prison</u> <u>population (theconversation.com)</u>
- <u>First Step Act was only half the job; now a</u> <u>'Second Step' is needed | The Hill</u>

Hinda Podcasts

- <u>Hinda Podcast</u>: Please check out our latest on mental health and incarceration, with collaboration of the reentry-based organization <u>No Shame</u> on <u>U</u>.
- **Hinda Hero:** Success in Reentry. What challenges exist, how does one overcome them, in reentry? Success in employment, spirituality, and reintegration. <u>Our client, Paul, describes</u> <u>his journey</u>. Passcode: Z1Zq3N%1
- Abby with Nancy Dangerfield: A powerful interview on how mental health is exacerbated by the justice system, in a deep-dive into the tragic experience of her son's death in prison, the abuse and neglect of that system, how overly punitive it is and counterproductive for those with mental health issues.

REENTRY

- FAMM Review: Hulu's "UnPrisoned" Smartly Handles Complex Reentry Issues (While Still Being Fun and Funny)
- <u>FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Takes Action During Second Chance Month to</u> <u>Strengthen Public Safety, Improve Rehabilitation in Jails and Prisons, and Support Successful</u> <u>Reentry</u>
- Please also check <u>Hinda's Reentry Resources page</u>.

FEDERAL

- Federal Hiring Mythbusters for Individuals with Criminal Records (opm.gov)
- FAMM's Proposed 2023 Amendments to the Federal Sentencing Guidelines
- Forbes: The Bureau Of Prisons Evolving Calculation Of First Step Act
- <u>https://journalistsresource.org/home/associated-press-federal-bureau-of-prisons/</u>

ADVOCACY

- <u>https://www.nber.org/reporter/2020numberl/benefits-rehabilitative-incarceration</u> The Benefits of Rehabilitative Incarceration are myriad as exemplified by Norway's system, which emphasizes education, job training, mental health, drug treatment, separation between high- and low-level offenders, individual living spaces, and shorter sentences.
- <u>https://www.labarberalearning.com/it-s-changed-what-i-m-living-for-reflections-of-justice-involved-men-and-women</u> "It's changed what I'm living for." Reflections from justice-involved men and women reveal the TUMI program's efficacy in improving healthy thinking patterns, coping strategies, positive relationships, and self esteem.

Resources



Listen to renowned attorney Elizabeth Kelley's podcast <u>here</u>. A nationally-recognized lawyer who has expertise in mental / health law: <u>https://www.elizabethkelleylaw.com/</u>

POST-TRAUMATIC PRISON DISORDER COULD IMPACT MILLIONS. CONGRESS WANTS TO <u>LEARN MORE</u>. Federal lawmakers are asking the National Institute of Mental Health to research the condition—also known as postincarceration syndrome—and share its findings with lawmakers. ADDICTION RECOVERY https://www.ourjewishrecovery.com/

EDUCATION FOR THE INCARCERATED OR IN REENTRY https://prisonprofessors.com/

JOBS IN REENTRY <u>https://www.youtube.com/@ALifeAfter</u> Layoff

GENERAL https://csgjusticecenter.org/ https://www.prisonlegalnews.org



ILLINOIS

<u>FAMM's Shaneva McReynolds to testify before Illinois House Judiciary Committee</u> for its hearing on the Earned Reentry Bill, which provides a pathway to be granted release by the Illinois Prisoner Review Board for those serving lengthy or life sentences...

Click <u>here</u> for the latest news from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. <u>Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy Job Board</u> has quite an extensive listing of positions around the country with a lot of remote/flexible and Chicago-based positions. Some are mid- to high-skilled but certainly plenty of entry-level and administrative support opportunities. I'm keeping an eye on it for one of my clients interested in grant work.

In the News

MacArthur Foundation

We Can Reduce Jail Populations and Keep Communities Safe Working to address over-incarceration and racial and ethnic disparities by changing the way America thinks about and uses iails.

To inform its deliberations, the Task Force commissioned and reviewed research on a wide range of topics. You can find the research on the <u>Task Force's website</u> along with other materials reviewed during the group's deliberations.

CCCJ Council on Criminal Justice

Here is the final report from the Council on Criminal Justice's Task

Force on Long Sentences. The report, <u>How Long is Long Enough?</u>, presents 14 recommendations to enhance judicial discretion in sentencing, promote individual and system accountability, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, better serve victims of crime, and increase public safety. It is the product of a year-long analysis from the Task Force's 16 members. The group examined the effects of long sentences on the criminal justice system and the populations it serves, including victims as well as people in prison, their families, and correctional staff.



<u>Congressional Briefing Highlights the Impact of the</u> <u>Second Chance Act</u> And <u>here</u> is their report for Expanding Access to Public Employment for People with Criminal Records - a sector which is increasingly available to those in reentry.



Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment (brochure)

For over 10 years, Rabbi Binyomin Scheiman connects everyday with his 13,000 strong congregation via social media. This book is a lighthearted collection of Rabbi Scheiman's beloved wit and intuitive wisdom.



Joke of the Week

<u>The dirty face/clean face burglar joke about learning Talmud.</u>

A young man knocks on the door of a great Talmudic scholar. "Rabbi, I wish to study Talmud."

"Do you know Aramaic?"

"No.

"Hebrew?"

"No."

"Have you ever studied Torah?"

"No, Rábbi, but I graduated from Harvard summa cum laude in philosophy, and received a PhD from Yale. I'd like to round out my education with a bit of Talmud.'

"I doubt that you are ready for Talmud. It is the broadest and deepest of books. If you wish, however, I will examine you in logic, and if you pass the test I will teach you Talmud."

"Good. I'm well versed in logic."

"First question. Two burglars come down a chimney. One emerges with a clean face, the other with a dirty face. Which one washes his face?' "The burglar with the dirty face."

"Wrong. The one with the clean face. Examine the logic. The burglar with a dirty face looks at the one with a clean face and thinks his face is clean. The one with a clean face looks at the burglar with a dirty face and thinks his face is dirty. So the one with the clean face washes."

"Very clever. Another question please."

"Two burglars come down a chimney. One emerges with a clean face, the other with a dirty face. Which one washes his face?"

"We established that. The burglar with the clean face washes."

"Wrong. Both wash. Examine the logic. The one with a dirty face thinks his face is clean. The one with a clean face thinks his face is dirty. So the burglar with a clean face washes. When the one with a dirty face sees him washing, however, he realizes his face must be dirty too. Thus both wash."

"I didn't think of that. Please ask me another."

"Two burglars come down a chimney. One emerges with a clean face, the other with a dirty face. Which one washes his face?" "Well, we know both wash."

"Wrong. Neither washes. Examine the logic. The one with the dirty face thinks his face is clean. The one with the clean face thinks his face is dirty. But when clean-face sees that dirty-face doesn't bother to wash, he also doesn't bother. So neither washes. As you can see, you are not ready for Talmud." "Rabbi, please, give me one more test."

"Two burglars come down a chimney. One emerges with a clean face, the other with a dirty face. Which one washes his face?" "Neither!"

"Wrong. And perhaps now you will see why Harvard and Yale cannot prepare you for Talmud. Tell me, how is it possible that two men come down the same chimney, and one emerges with a clean face, while the other has a dirty face?'

"But you've just given me four contradictory answers to the same question! That's impossible!'

"No, my son, that's Talmud."