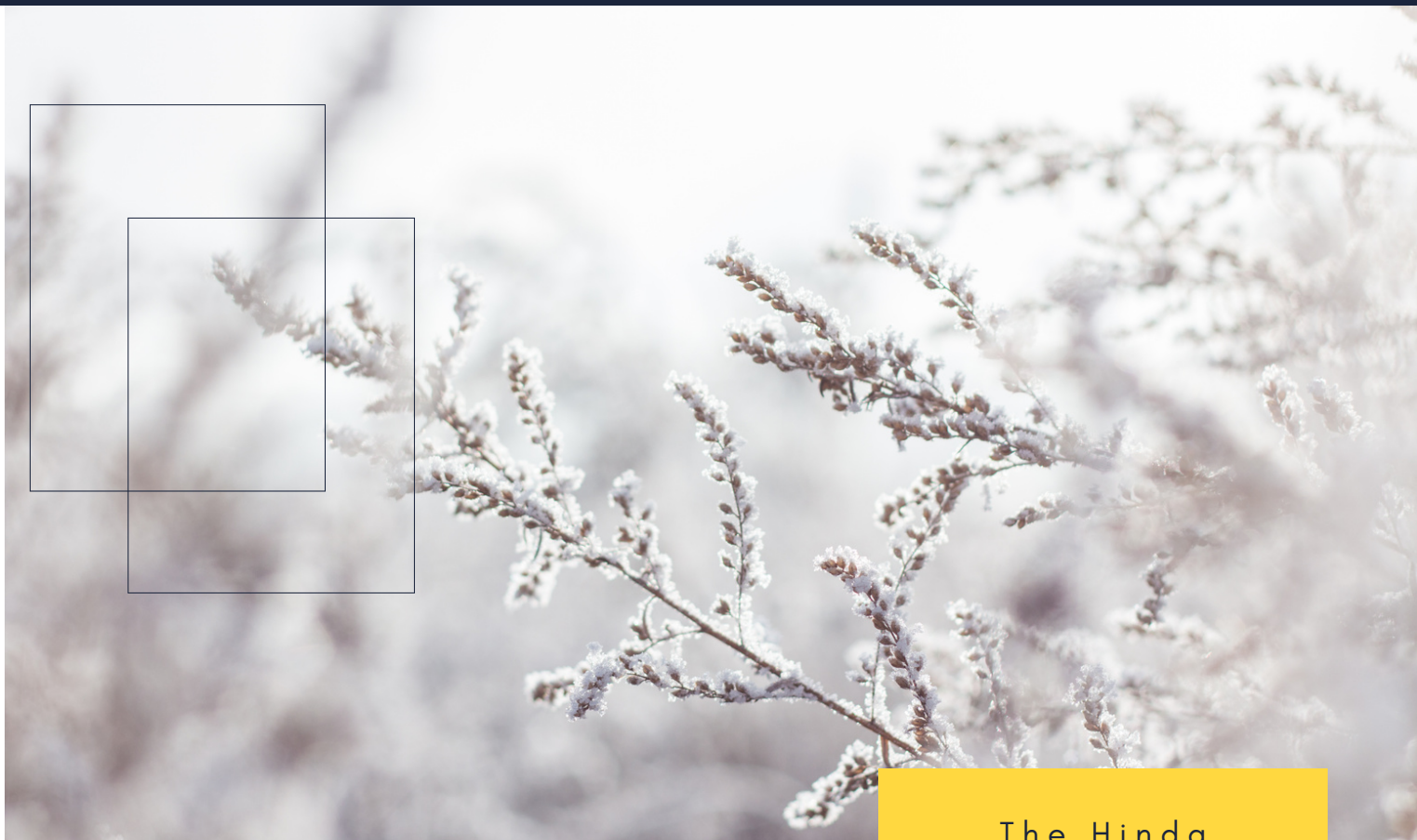




The Hinda Herald

January 2024 Issue 5784



The bulletin written by our Hinda Family for our Hinda Family. We welcome any articles.

Read ahead to find more about:

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The Hinda
Institute Bulletin

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Dvar Torah

“אמת מארץ תצמח”

King David writes in Psalm 85, “The truth will grow from the ground”. This verse tells us that no matter how obscured, how buried, how concealed from eye and mind it may be, the truth will eventually come out. The fact that truth will always prevail is an astounding fact and not always intuitive. It is also comforting and fortifies our hope and belief in justice. The verse however enlightens us even more: that just like a seed, the truth will grow not in spite of the earth and dirt that buries it, but because of it. Like a planted seed, all it needs is a little water.

Like all things the Torah teaches us, this dynamic is found in three dimensions: in the physical world, in the yearly cycle of time, and in the soul. It is the soul-dimension that we will examine here.

As we Jews seek to know who we are, what is our core identity, we find that we are multi-faceted. There is our physical existence, the body, with which we interact with the world around us. It's an amazing thing, this body, a complex and delicately balanced organism whose every function is of such wondrous design that by itself may be studied for a lifetime, yet even after many, many lifetimes leaves so much more to be discovered. Yet this is not the core of who we are. This body has a life-force within it, a spiritual dimension that is simultaneously one with it and independent of it. It has a soul which feels, thinks, desires and aspires. It is this part of us which makes us human, yet it, too, is not all we are. There is a part of us that is more than human; it's G-dly.

For most of us, most of the time, we function on the level of our human soul. It's where our consciousness is focused and what we're concerned with by default. But that's not the whole truth of who we are. At our very core, at the very essence of our being, there is a G-dly soul that desires not the physical and worldly but that which is G-dly. It cleaves to G-d, it's greatest aspiration is to be one with G-d, and it's deepest yearning is to fulfill the mission for which it was sent into this world by G-d: to make over the human soul, the human body and the physical world around it to be G-dly just like it.

This is the truth of who we are. But as long as we remain focused on the physical and worldly as an objective in and of itself, that truth, that G-dliness within, remains buried, covered by earth and earthliness. So how do we access that truth? How do we give it expression? How do we fulfill that G-dly mission? To that end, G-d gave us His Torah and His commandments.

Just like a seed planted in the earth, that G-dliness within will grow and sprout forth, not in spite of all the earthliness that covers it but because of it. All it needs is water. The water is Torah. So take some time today to study at least a bit more Torah than you might have otherwise. Let that G-dliness grow. Put that study into practice by doing a mitzvah. Give that G-dliness expression. This is how G-d instructed us to fulfill the purpose for which he created us, for which we are needed. This is how the world becomes a G-dly place.

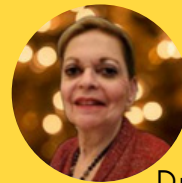


UPCOMING

Courses

“The goal of education is understanding.”
-Frank Bell

"Problem Solving: Strategies to Thrive" with Dr. Kutzen and Beth Palzet: January 3, 10, 17- Have you struggled to overcome mental challenges and addictions? This course gives you a new perspective and a way forward.



Dr. Kutzen

"Legal Panel" with David Grosky, Esq.: January 31, February 7, 14, 21- Know your rights responsibilities and new and upcoming laws. A practical guide to navigating the law. Discuss with expert lawyers in the field.



David Grosky

"Mental Health & Families" with Bonnie Lane and Liz Margolies: March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3- Are you struggling with a loved ones mental health challenges? This course will give you coping strategies. Why, how, and when to tell others about your loved one's incarceration. **Note:** This course is only open to people who have family members with a mental illness.



Bonnie Lane



Liza Margolies

www.hindahelps.com/courses

Video:

"What's the point of us Jews?" by Rabbi Manis Friedman on YouTube

Up Next: Thanks to our new intern, Miriam, who wrote this new article on Criminal Justice Reform:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Recent Legislative Work in the Criminal Justice System

By: Miriam

There are many recent successes and challenges of the criminal justice system in Illinois. Some of those challenges are limited available court dates, increased pretrial detention, and limited financial resources. It is also more challenging for those living in rural rather than urban areas to receive support: it is found that 48% of arrestees in urban counties had received treatment in the past versus just 37% of arrestees held in rural counties. Another issue of the criminal justice system is that the prisons are severely overcrowded.

What can we do to rebuild the system? We can focus on providing services to those who need it, like providing education and job training. We need to deal with the issues of drugs and crime instead of throwing more people into prison.

A recent success of the Criminal Justice System in Illinois is the SAFE-T Act, which makes Illinois a national trailblazer in the effort to ensure pretrial detention is based on the likelihood to avoid rearrest and make trial dates, rather than simply the ability to afford cash bail. The number of people being sentenced to jails has also dropped significantly in the last few years because of proper pretrials.

Additionally, The Prison Rape Elimination Act, or PREA, requires regular audits of correctional facilities by trained and certified auditors to ensure compliance with PREA standards. This year, a John Howard Association (JHA) staff member (who is trained and certified) led a PREA audit of one of Illinois' juvenile detention facilities. This is important work because people in custody must be kept safe. Conducting a PREA audit was important for the facility and for JHA to better understand the statute, its implementation, and its effectiveness. This work will help JHA better evaluate the PREA policies and practices inside secure facilities and advocate for changes that will increase protections for vulnerable individuals and improve outcomes. Going into 2024, JHA is looking forward to making prisons safer and better-staffed.

Another reformatory change for Illinois in 2023, was that Dr. Shaneva McReynolds from FAMM participated in a press conference that advocated for two parole bills that provide second chances for incarcerated individuals in Illinois state prisons. The Earned Reentry and Elder Parole Bill are safe, responsible ways to release people who aren't a threat and re-focus public safety resources on people committing crimes today.

All in all, the criminal justice system has its flaws and shortcomings, yet there are many recent strides in improving the system which gives us hope. This year, we have seen improvements in the Illinois criminal justice system and optimistically we will continue to see improvement in 2024.

I conducted an interview with a few successfully returned citizens, men and women, to hear firsthand about their experiences in prison.



Hinda Podcasts

PODCASTS

Hinda Hero - David

One of our heroes, is interviewed by our director, Abby, who describes his journey through the criminal justice system as a former attorney, what he did during his long period of incarceration, the way he sustained himself, the mitzvot he did, and how he was able to restore himself after his release.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- **REGISTRY Article:** [Rachmones for Meghan](#), by our member Paul, who attended, with [Women Against the Registry](#), a meeting with Meghan Walsh, daughter of John Walsh, who was instrumental in establishing the Registry decades ago, and her thoughts about its revision and devastating consequences for the lives of millions of Americans.
- [Lightning Strike](#), from [Michelle Alfano](#) and Mohammed Faheem, on WCPT 820 AM Chicago, on prisons in Iowa and elsewhere: [Michelle Alfano's](#) interview about the abuse of solitary confinement in Iowa correctional facilities on WCPT radio. It starts at 16:00 and ends at 32:00. "Feel free to forward this to others, and leave a comment on their page. Thank you! Michelle"

REENTRY- EMPLOYERS FIND SUCCESS HIRING THE PREVIOUSLY DETAINED

- [3 Myths About Hiring People with Criminal Records - Harvard Business Review](#)
- [Fresh Start Financial Capabilities Program for Returning Citizens](#)
- [There's Virtually No Risk In Hiring People With Conviction Records, New Data Shows](#)
- [Book Review — Mass Supervision: Probation, Parole, and the Illusion of Safety and Freedom](#)



SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CHILDREN OF THE INCARCERATED

- <https://www.chegg.com/scholarships/eskew-law-scholarship-f-children-convicted-felons-14926>

JOBS IN REENTRY

[Re-Entry Employment Service Program](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/@ALifeAfterLayoff>

Please also check [Hinda's Reentry Resources](#).



ADDICTION RECOVERY

- www.ourjewishrecovery.com



Our Jewish Recovery
Happiness. Holiness. Healing. Together.
One Day At A Time.

In the News

PRISON / CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- [New laws for Illinois prisoners set to go into effect starting Jan. 1](#)
- [Vera Institute: Diversion Programs Are a Smart, Sustainable Investment in Public Safety](#)
- [The US Prison System Relies on Extremely Long Sentences](#)
- [Judicial Interventions for Inhumane Prison and Jail Conditions: Despite limits imposed by statutes and court rulings, judges still have numerous tools to encourage – and when necessary, compel – the government to protect people in its custody.](#)
- [To Reduce Unnecessary Incarceration, Focus on Public Safety and Prison Reduction: A new bill – the Public Safety and Prison Reduction Act – would let Congress help states break the cycle of excessive imprisonment and its devastating impact on families and communities.](#)
- [The Jewish Case for Prison Reform: What the Lubavitcher Rebbe understood about the criminal justice system](#)
- [Film tracks the match made in prison that turned a convict into a rabbi on a mission: 'The Jewish Jail Lady and the Holy Thief' tells feel-good true story of Harriet Rossetto and Mark Borovitz, who turned over a new leaf to help former convicts and addicts in LA](#)

ILLINOIS IN THE NEWS

- [Gov. Pritzker signs bill overhauling mandatory supervised release](#)
- [Got a loved one in an Illinois prison? WBEZ's Prisoncast! wants to hear from you.](#)

Click [here](#) for the latest news from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

JOKE OF THE WEEK

Twitter Silly:

Where are you in life – is a question we need to ask ourselves from time to time – if you find that you're improving and positively affecting others – then you're doing okay.

Lethal Confection

A dietitian was once addressing a large audience in Chicago.

"The material we put into our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here, years ago. Red meat is awful. Some vegetables can be disastrous, and none of us realizes the chemicals in our drinking water. But there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all and we all eat it. Can anyone here tell me what lethal product I'm referring to?"

He scans the audience quickly and points to a man in the front row, "You, sir, why don't you give us your guess?"

The man in the front row lowered his head and said, "Wedding cake?"

Resources



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

EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE INCARCERATED

- What is [#Reentry2030](#)? It's a national initiative that aims to improve reentry success for people exiting prison and on supervision. Missouri and Alabama were the first states to sign on this year! Learn more information, including how your state can join [here](#).
- <https://todayshomeowner.com/moving/guides/a-guide-to-finding-housing-for-the-previously-incarcerated/>
- [Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy Job Board](#) 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.

LINKS AND GROUPS OF INTEREST

<https://matirasurim.org/> Rabbi Spritzer's 'Reaching Out' organization

<https://csgjusticecenter.org/>

<https://www.prisonlegalnews.org>
Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment (brochure)



[Justice Reform 101: What to Read, Watch, and Listen To](#)



Please also check [Hinda's Reentry Resources](#).