

"EACH ONE IS PRECIOUS" Headlights

Fall 2013

Vol. 5 No. 2

Shining lights: Jewish education for people with special challenges

Tiferes Zekaynim: The Beauty of the Elderly

**A Holistic, Spiritual
Perspective on Aging**



**Giving by
Receiving**



**Fostering Creativity:
A Profile**



**JEEP opens first
Tri-state Jewish
Recovery Center**



...and more!

Congratulations!

JEEP has purchased a building for its new operations headquarters and to be the home of the first Jewish Recovery Center in Ohio, Kentucky or Indiana.

For seven years, since its inception in 2006, JEEP has sensed a vital need in local Jewish education and worked ceaselessly to fill it. Many of our precious fellow Jews had been unable to fully access the rich treasures of Jewish life, because of learning challenges, disabilities, isolation, mental and other health issues or being in a hospital or senior facility with little or no Jewish programming.

Working on a modest budget, JEEP has made a vital difference for thousands. Our files are brimming with meaningful stories of connection: children from impoverished and challenged homes receiving Jewish education, camp or school experience, people struggling with addictions getting the additional Jewish support they need to attain and maintain sobriety, critical pastoral counseling, creative Jewish programming and visitation for seniors in nursing homes and other facilities, children with learning differences or disabilities enjoying Jewish learning for the first time, and so much more.

But a soul needs a body, an organization needs a home. JEEP's work is largely in the field, finding and meeting people where they're at. For five years, Mr. Ronnie Wilhelm had generously supplied our office needs at 9709 Reading Road in Evendale. Now JEEP

has grown to need more than an office; rather an educational center comprising: A comfortable place to teach children, youth and adults with special needs or circumstances. A safe, warm, space for our Jewish Recovery program to host meetings, Shabbos and holiday events and a library for recovery materials and related resources. Administrative offices for JEEP.

Thanks to the generous support of Rabbi and Mrs. Baruch Cohon of Los Angeles and the Cohon Family Memorial Foundation, we are grateful to announce the purchase of the Arthur Schreiber Building at 1995 Section Road which will function as JEEP's center of operations and home for the first and only Jewish Recovery Center in Ohio, Indiana or Kentucky. Conveniently located on the border of Amberley and Golf Manor Villages, within minutes of a full range of Jewish institutions, bus stops, major highways and interstates, this lovely facility has office and meeting space that is "just right."

Sam and Rachel Boymel have already proudly sponsored the Boymel Lobby. Many other dedication opportunities remain from kosher kitchen to landscaping, meeting rooms, offices and library and an outdoor electronic message sign. All are welcome. Please stop by, use our library and access our classes.

For more information: 513-733-4400 or rabbij@jewisheducate.org.

Editorial

B"H

The Real Meaning of Growing Old

Is growing old a blessing, a challenge or "more than all of the above"? The Torah tells us that we must respect and honor the elderly for their life experience and wisdom, and all they have given us. But there's more: Our souls are sent down to this world to refine our bodies and our surroundings, to promote goodness and kindness, to do our part to bring redemption into the world. As we age, there is often pain and suffering but there's also potential for a kind of joy; we have nearly completed our mission. Perhaps it's like the last pitch in the winning game of the World Series or the call, "lift off" just before a rocket ship leaves the confines of this planet and departs for the stars.

Bodies age, not souls. Souls are eternal—always craving spiritual nourishment. Indeed, as their material preoccupations diminish, seniors often have the time and maturity to savor spiritual insights.

We at JEEP thrive on seeing seniors enjoy a sukkah, Chanukah party, Shabbos package, or visit from a friendly volunteer. They have shared impassioned questions that may have been brewing for a half century or more, relishing the chance to "have it out" with a friendly, down-to-earth rabbi.

We owe our seniors the chance to connect with the insight, camaraderie and comfort that our rich heritage offers. At this special time in their life journey, the timeless depth of Judaism can offer a unique solace and perspective. We bring that connection to hundreds of seniors in dozens of locations.

This issue of Headlights brings several aspects of aging to you.

- 1- Learning to accept one's dependence on others, whether because of illness or aging.
- 2- Profile of an active, local senior helping others uncover their creative spirit.
- 3- A deeper look at the Torah perspective on aging.
- 4- A touching story, where a grandfather's heartfelt wish and prayers open doors for his grandson.

Wishing all our friends and supporters a most happy, healthy and meaningful New Year,

Rabbi Yaakov and Miriam Karp Rabbi Levi and Devora Fass

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

Please visit us at jewisheducate.org

Feel free to contact us about Headlights or Jewish education.
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Jewish Spiritual Tools for Meeting Life's
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Fostering Creativity: A Profile

There's a little magic going on, every Thursday morning, in the art studio at the Mayerson JCC. People feel it. Walking down the hall, they often peek in and find themselves drawn inside. They look around, admire all the work in progress, feel the energy of something special in the air. It's another week in the Open Studio for Seniors.

People are seated at the long tables. Some are painting lyrical landscapes, others are using vibrant pastels. One man specializes in cartoons. A woman draws a delicate line sketch with a fine-tipped pen. One man is carving wooden designs and figurines. And in the middle, a pleasant, articulate woman is giving the day's formal lesson, holding up a few books or catalogs from her beloved art collection, sharing her extensive knowledge and passion for art.

After the lesson, she walks around, gently praising, guiding, offering suggestions to each person. Even though their skill levels, mediums, and styles vary greatly, and they're each working on different subject matter, she's not flustered or frustrated. She enters each person's creative space respectfully and offers guidance appropriate for them.

Rita Wasserman is this very special art teacher, whose generous spirit makes this magic possible. She combines her love of art, education, and desire to make the world a better place through this mitzvah of helping her fellow seniors discover a wondrous world of expression.

Rita, raised in Tennessee, graduated from Ohio State with a major in painting, sculpture and art history, and a minor in English. She earned her MA from Miami University in Art and Education. Rita taught art in the public schools for thirty-three years, working with children from early elementary through junior high. She also supervised student teachers and taught courses in Art Education at U-C.

Since her retirement, Rita has been busy. In addition to being a practicing artist, working almost daily on her paintings and sculptures, she has taught the class at the J for many years. She had spent much time at Cedar Village when her mother-in-law was a resident there, and since her passing, Rita continues offering a monthly class to the residents. Giving comes naturally. "Once the need for food and shelter is solved, I was taught to focus on 'Tzedaka' and 'Tikun Olam'—giving back and volunteering. We want to leave the world a better place than when we walked in," Rita explains matter-of-factly.

Rita loves helping others find their unique style and voice. "In my teaching, a basic thesis is to find the core of each human being in creating, and give them skills and tools to 'let them publish

themselves,' to help their creativity emerge." Rita feels she's being successful when the participants and their output are so diverse. "You see, it's good when everyone's work is so different, each person has their own way," she explains. "To find that something special, and shine it up, to see people grow, it's very satisfying."

We want to leave the world a better place than when we walked in.

And it works. Class participants cover the gamut from well-seasoned artists to complete novices, some trying their hand for the first time. All learn, all try, all progress, from session to session and from year to year.

We all have unique talents and experiences we can share, no matter our age or health. What we've done and learned can benefit another, whether helping someone with their taxes, garden, or just offering simple friendship. Even those confined to a nursing home, can offer a smile to a roommate, a nurse or aide. Rita is a wonderful example of using her unique talent and expertise to give and help others find their creative spark, a bountiful well of pleasure and meaning.

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A Holistic, Spiritual Perspective on Aging



By Simon Jacobson

Many years add in wisdom. Job 32:7

If we measure life solely in terms of material gain and productivity, we will inevitably see the physical weakening of old age as a liability. But man's true wealth is measured in intellectual, emotional and spiritual gains. The soul, unlike the body, never ages, it only grows.

Because man was created to spiritualize the material world, the only way to achieve true happiness is through spiritual growth and achievement. And that means giving to others, loving and sharing, and finding a deeper meaning in everything you do.

Just because we stop going to work every day doesn't mean that we stop using our body and soul. The same energy that you once spent planning your business can now be devoted to projects that you never had time for, projects that shine a light of goodness on those around you. Remember, the experience of an older man or woman, whether in business, civic matters, or in the home—is priceless. Do not feel defeated by your age and its physical effects. Do not heed those who say you are less useful because you are less physically strong than you once were.

Our twilight years are just what the name implies—the beautiful culmination of a day well spent. We look back at what we have learned, confident and eager to impart this wisdom unto theirs. Just

as you may need a younger person's helping hand in your physical life, that person needs your helping hand in his spiritual life.

No matter how weak our bodies may become, the soul remains strong, constantly yearning for nourishment.

Set aside a special time each day to study, pray, nurture your mind and heart. These activities are not merely a way to fill your spare time, but a means to rejuvenate your spirit. More and more, medicine is teaching us that our physical health is closely intertwined with our spiritual health.

An aged man who could barely walk asked a group of young men to help carry his packages. Instead, they began to mock him. "Old people like you need to stay home," one of them said. "You are useless and just a burden to the rest of us."

The young men were musicians, and a few days later, they went off into the woods to find a quiet place to play. As they were walking, they heard from a far-off clearing a rich, beautiful voice singing a haunting melody. From a distance, they finally saw the singer, sitting alone on a rock, singing into the heavens. As they drew closer, they saw that it was none other than the old man.

Adapted from Towards A Meaningful Life, by Simon Jacobson, William Morrow and Co, 1995

Story: A Grandfather's Legacy



Sidney lay in his hospital bed, surrounded by the bleep and blinking of the monitors. As he dozed, hazy images of his eighty-two years floated before his eyes. Moments of sweet childhood. His wife, of blessed memory, in the days of their youthful love and marriage. His children. But when he thought of his grandson, Steve, his heart ached. The family had sheltered Sidney from Steve's full story which had begun as Sidney's health began a serious decline, but he knew something was wrong. Something had been wrong now for years.

Steve, handsome, athletic, intelligent had been struggling. In and out of college. Sent away someplace for a few months. Was it drugs? Sometimes he seemed his old self, sparkly eyes, full of life. Sometimes Steve seemed dulled, evasive, just not there. The whole family was tense and preoccupied. What was it?

Sidney's thoughts were interrupted by a knock on the door. "Sidney?" a young man called out in a gentle voice as he walked in. He introduced himself as the volunteer Jewish chaplain, Rabbi Levi Fuss. The man perked up with excitement. He knew his condition, serious. He sensed his days were numbered. With great emotion, he grabbed the rabbi's hand, and told him how much his visit meant to him at this very moment. Levi listened to the patient as he poured out his heart, then offered counsel and Jewish insights. Rabbi Fuss then said the

appropriate prayers with him, leaving Sidney feeling comforted and much more at ease. The rabbi visited a few more times over the next week, building a relationship with Sidney and several members of his family. Unfortunately, Sidney passed away by the end of the week.

The family had seen their father's emotional response to Rabbi Fuss. They asked him to conduct the funeral since they didn't have their own rabbi. During this time, Rabbi Fuss met Steve and both Steve and his mother confided that he was struggling to recover after years of addiction. Rabbi Fuss told him about Cincinnati Jewish Recovery, and connected him with Rabbi Karp. He began to participate regularly in CJR meetings and events, along with his Narcotics Anonymous program and private therapy. Steve felt that the Jewish recovery connection gave him something unique and powerful which, along with his other recovery work finally gave him the ability to establish some quality clean time.

Today, Steve is one year clean and back in college. He testifies that a significant factor in his ongoing recovery is his continuing participation in Cincinnati Jewish Recovery. Perhaps one of his grandfather's last wishes and prayers were for just that. Sidney's warm response to Rabbi Fuss's visit facilitated this important connection for his beloved grandson.



Living the Fear: On Becoming Dependent

By Miriam Goodman

It started off as a normal Shabbat evening. I lit my candles, and we enjoyed the Shabbat meal. After, I suggested to my husband that we go for a walk.

Our building doesn't have any hallway lights that stay on continuously, so we walked down the dark staircase carefully, but I guess not carefully enough. One minute I was walking and talking and the next minute I was tripping over my feet. I missed the bottom step, landed flat down, and broke my wrist. My whole body was in shock.

I broke the wrist on my right hand, my dominant hand. I was a mess. There is very little I can do with my left hand, so I was totally dependent on my husband, I felt useless. My greatest fear for years had been to be dependent on someone. This had become my reality.

I've worked in a retirement and nursing home for many years. I've met so many wonderful, vibrant people, who slowly evolved from being totally independent to totally dependent. One of the residents was my mother-in-law of blessed memory.

Here was a lady, a very proud lady, who did volunteer work all her life. She belonged to different Jewish organizations and was always ready to lend her hand. Everyone knew that if you were stuck, you could call on Toby.

My mother-in-law went from living in a very nice retirement apartment, looking after herself, baking cakes and mandelbrot for her grandchildren, to living in the nursing home. As time passed, she needed more and more nursing assistance.

What does all this have to do with my broken wrist? Now it was me who needed personal help getting dressed and having my food cut, and my fear of losing my independence hit me again.

I couldn't cope. For me, losing my independence and having to rely on others, even my husband and children, made me feel sick and useless. All I could do was sit around and watch.

I started to wonder: Why do we so fear losing our independence? Why is it so hard for us to accept help graciously from family members or neighbors? Do we think others will look down on us? Do we feel like we're a burden on our loved ones? Do we see ourselves as getting old and useless?

But, what about the caregiver?

As Jews, we teach our children the mitzvah of helping a friend in need. We teach them how to comfort. Our children have the mitzvah of honoring their father and mother. Many a child has looked after dependent, elderly or sick parents. I have heard the following statement many times. "When I was growing up my parents had the responsibility to look after me. Now that the tables have turned and they are sick and I have the opportunity and responsibility look after them." Our dependence enables

them to give and to grow.

Losing one's independence, even if only temporarily, is a difficult situation. Yet as I have reluctantly learned, it gives others the ability to give back to you, and it allows you to see the blessings in your life through those who come to your aid.

Fortunately, my loss of independence was temporary. Six weeks later, the cast was removed. I am now in physical therapy, and hopefully I will once again be the one my family depends on.

But had it not been for my situation, I don't know if I would have recognized that allowing yourself to receive from others, and specifically from those you love, is truly an act of giving as well.

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Happy New Year!

JEEP: Critical and unique



Some people ask us, "Cincinnati has lots of Jewish agencies, organizations, schools and synagogues. What is so critical and unique about JEEP's work?"

The short answer is that JEEP reaches one thousand local Jewish people each year with critical services that they aren't receiving elsewhere.

Here's how it works:

JEEP's mission is based on two central principles

1. Every Jewish person is infinitely precious.
2. Mitzvos, Torah and everything wonderful about the Jewish experience are the rightful inheritance of each one of us, including those in crisis, at risk or having special needs and circumstances.

Our mission, therefore, is

- a) to make Jewish education and experience accessible, attractive and useful to every local person with special needs, circumstances, at risk or in crisis, so that
- b) they can access their rich spiritual inheritance, becoming better equipped to meet their unusual challenges and
- c) become more successful and happier members of our community

This is expressed in uniquely powerful ways in our five programs and one thousand clients annually:

- children and youth
- Patients in hospitals
- Seniors in facilities or isolated at home
- Adults with disabilities
- Adults in recovery from alcoholism and addiction; substance abuse prevention presentations for youth

If you would like to receive Headlights by email, contact us at rabbi@jewisheducate.org

Our new address is 1995 Section Road, Cincinnati, OH 45237. Please send all correspondence, donations, etc. to this address.

JEEP sees each person, no matter how "limited," challenged, ill or isolated, as a unique and indispensable individual; fully deserving of whatever aspects of Jewish experience and spirituality they can use to support and enrich their lives. We actively seek out new clients who may need our services, help them connect, and provide access to Judaism presented in a meaningful way. JEEP makes a unique and powerful difference, helping to enhance, inspire, rebuild or save lives every day.

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Raising a Child with Bipolar Disorder

By Debbie Orkin

When my oldest son was born, we were so excited. It was pure bliss... until we brought him home. During his first six months, he was very cranky and difficult. Some thought perhaps he had a developmental disability, but he reached all his milestones, some one month early, and he could speak a little on a telephone at fifteen months. So we thought that we had been blessed with a very bright child. Healthy and bright – what more could a mom want?

As he grew, we started noticing behavior patterns. At first we thought he was just spoiled. Whenever he didn't get his way, he would have a complete fit. At two-and-a-half, he threw a dining room chair at me because we didn't have any Raisin Bran. Our pediatrician sent us to a child psychologist, but it is hard to diagnose a two-year-old.

The major problems started when he was four. His teachers kept calling. He was constantly hurting other kids, not listening, making inappropriate comments, etc., so we saw another child psychologist. The doctor felt that it was a behavioral issue, and by being strict and challenging him intellectually, he would straighten out. So for the next two years, we tried. It wasn't easy but we somehow managed. And then, in March, three years ago, our whole world was turned around.

It started on Purim. He was aggressive, running away, and very explosive. A relative referred us to a psychiatrist. At first she thought it was ADHD. I was so happy. Finally, we thought we knew what was wrong. She prescribed Ritalin. For the first day, it was great. I felt like I had my son back. He told me he never felt that relaxed in his whole life. Well, that changed quickly over the next few days when he threatened to jump out of my bedroom window, then climbed out the living room window and tried to run away. The psychiatrist now saw what it really was. **My beautiful, brilliant, funny, compassionate son was literally climbing her bookcases, screaming like a wild animal.** We got the diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder.

A chemical imbalance in the brain that causes severe mood swings, alternating between mania and depression, bipolar disorder is different in children than adults. When an adult with bipolar becomes manic, they may go on shopping sprees and get into loads of debt, or write hundreds of pages of manuscript that make no sense. But in pediatric bipolar, the mania is different. The child tends to become extremely aggressive and violent.

For the next week, I was like a zombie. I couldn't eat, sleep, or get through much of the day without crying. We were completely overrun and felt very guilty. We had thought that our son could control his rages. He had looked like he was turning them on and off. In reality, he couldn't. I became very angry and frustrated. As time went on, I joined an online support group and got a counselor to help me sort out my feelings.

During the first months after his diagnosis, our son went through a myriad of medications. Many had pretty bad side effects. It wasn't until summer that something seemed to work. In early July, he spiraled down very quickly. We decided to hospitalize him. It was a nightmare, with an entire day of frantic calls between two hospitals and our insurance company before we could admit him. The unit was a locked psych unit, where our bags were checked for "contraband," such as glass, picture frames, sharp objects or belts.

When I visited the next day, I sat in the hallway crying, watching two staff members carry him into a "timeout room." I just kept thinking, G d, please get us through this. Please help our son get healthy again. He stayed for a week, but had to be readmitted four days later due to extremely violent behavior, including trying to swing on the blade of a running ceiling fan, choking me and beating me, because I said "no" to his request.

We got through the rest of the summer as best we could. It was very stressful for our other sons, especially our second son who was five-years-old. He had unfortunately become a human punching bag to his big brother. When we explained what was happening, our five-year-old jumped for joy. That is how unsafe he felt in our home. It's a terrible feeling to know that you just can't keep your children safe, especially from a sibling. When school started, our son went back to school. We explained the condition to his teachers. Things seemed to be going well considering he had spent two weeks in a psych unit, and had to readjust

During the second week of school, there was an incident. Pretty serious in their minds, overreaction in ours. We had a meeting with the staff and our psychiatrist. It was a very nerve-racking time. We were afraid that the school was preparing to kick our son out. But after much discussion and prayer, especially prayer, things in school calmed down.

Unfortunately, his behaviors at home did not. When our son first went into the hospital, my husband asked what my biggest fear was. I feared he would try to kill himself. Maybe not today, tomorrow, or next month, but somewhere down the road.

It was that Yom Kippur night. He tried to strangle himself with his belt. I realized that it wasn't just an impulse. He said he didn't want to live anymore. My heart almost stopped beating. How would a seven-year-old know about these things? He told me he always felt stupid, (he taught himself to play chess when he was four), nobody loved him (we tell him that we love him every day), and that he has no friends (even after the school incident, someone invited him to sleep over). I realized, that he had really low self-esteem and was slightly delusional. We didn't hospitalize him that night, although we should have.

When we felt that we had hit rock bottom, we decided to finally be proactive, rather than solely reactive. We had learned that we

weren't the only ones in our community with these struggles. We decided to start our own support group, with a core of six or seven families. There are three main goals: 1) providing basic support 2) educating the community about mental illness to help take away the stigma, and 3) providing a social outlet for families.

For many years, we hoped that this problem would just somehow go away. We have now accepted that taking care of our son is a daily struggle that could continue for the rest of his life. His days, and our lives, are very unpredictable due to this horrific disease, but for now, until her stabilizes, this is what we have. We, including our other sons, have somewhat figured out what sets him off. He is doing very well in school. It's a special school for emotionally disturbed children, a level 5—the most restrictive environment within the public school system. They use a point system for positive reinforcement. The school has been really good for my son's self-esteem. But it is also strict. If you mess up, you are in the resource room, if you get violent, you go to the isolation room. Most important, the school accepts him for who he is. He also attends a weekly learning program for special needs boys at a local yeshiva.

Connecting to others in similar situations reinforced something we always knew in our minds but had to really feel in our hearts and souls—the need for true faith and belief in our Creator. He is the one who is truly guiding us. There is no question that if He gave us our situation, He can also give us the means and strength to deal with it. And every day, we see more and more that there can be light at the end of what has been a very dark tunnel.

And with time, I can see progress. A few years back I could not imagine that I could be a source of strength and optimism to others. But I have, and that has inspired me to believe that we will make it through this. And, as hard as it can be to see at times; underneath the anger and illness is a beautiful child, a precious soul that we have been blessed to have as our son. We have faced many challenges and, unfortunately, may have more to come. But we believe that we will somehow have the strength to face them, and one day, overcome them as well.

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THE KING IS IN THE FIELD

Now is the time that G-d is most approachable



Disabilities: Acceptance

By Sheva Givre

Right now Rozie is building with Legos, big Mega block size that is perfect for her little hands. This task and size are age appropriate for a two year old and I feel a smile, a smile of acceptance. I accept you Rozie I feel like saying out loud. I accept you and your diagnosis. This is easy to do when she is performing at a level that I find appropriate.

Rozie has recently regressed in her walking. She was standing, then taking steps, and it was all so exciting, until one day she sat down and went back to crawling and refuses to walk again. I know this is a stage and next week she could be vertical again, but acceptance is a little harder when the task is so darn frustrating. She is two years old now and I have been carrying her for exactly two years, and often my back hurts.

The walking milestone is eating up my acceptance. I love my children. I love them with a deep strong fire, but acceptance is another story. Just because we love our children does not mean we necessarily accept our sweet ones. It can be a hard mountain to climb because love is instinctual, but acceptance is learned.

Many of us think we accept, but it's often the easy stuff we accept and we like to push the rest under the rug. It's easy to accept her when she is playing nicely, but when she refuses to walk and wants to crawl in the mulch my acceptance tolerance wears thin and I get a little mad at Down syndrome.

I know it's silly because this scenario could be rewritten to fit many circumstances with and without a diagnosis. It's just easier to blame it on something, so I blame the extra chromosome.

"Darn you chromosome just let her WALK!"



It's really not so logical and I know I have to make a choice.

This morning I felt my frustration pot boiling over as Rozie crawled onto our deck. Inevitably, she gets splinters from the flooring that needs a good sanding and a coat of paint. As I am pulling these splinters from her legs, and she is crying, my frustration starts to grow and my acceptance starts to decrease. This is not the parent I want to be. If I was observing from the outside I would have so many comments for that parent. I need to breath and accept. Breath in and out, calm down and accept.

I thank G-d every day for my daughter. Because of her I took off my dark shades and look at our world with a new Technicolor acceptance. I no longer see mental disorders, disabilities, and special needs. Only beautiful people and gorgeous souls. I never had that vision before Rozie. I saw a lot differences, social lines, and everything was kind of clouded over with a fog like my glasses needed a good wiping. It's amazing that this one little chromosome can frustrate me and make me so happy all at the same time.

Accepting my Rozie isn't just accepting her strengths, it's accepting the entire package including her struggles. Acceptance means I will open my arms wide to my daughter through her entire life, whether she gets married and lives independently, or grows up and still needs care and

assistance. She is my daughter my baby. I love her with everything I have, and I also accept her not because she scores high on her evaluations, but because she is mine and I am hers. Acceptance is love and love is acceptance and I have a lot of room for both.

Reprinted from myshtub.com



Recovery: So Help Me G-d

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY STUDY LINKS RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY WITH SUCCESSFUL SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

Washington, D.C.- In the first analysis of its kind, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University released a 52-page two-year study, *So Help Me God: Substance Abuse, Religion and Spirituality*. The report finds that tapping the power of religion and spirituality has enormous potential for lowering the risk of substance abuse among teens and adults and, when combined with professional treatment, for promoting recovery.

Special CASA analyses of National Household Survey data, its own Teen Surveys and the General Social Survey reveal that adults and teens who consider religion to be very important and who attend religious services weekly or more are far less likely to smoke, drink or use illicit drugs. Individuals who, in addition to receiving treatment, attend spiritually-based support programs, such as the 12-Step programs of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, are more likely to maintain sobriety. Individuals in successful recovery often show greater levels of faith and spirituality than those who relapse.

"If ever the sum were greater than the parts, it is in combining the power of God, religion and spirituality with the power of science and professional medicine to prevent and treat substance abuse and addiction," said Joseph A. Califano, Jr., CASA President and former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

In light of the significance of religion and spirituality to the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, the most troubling findings of this report are the discoveries of two profound disconnects:

- The extent to which clergy see substance abuse as a problem among their congregations yet lack the knowledge and training of how to deal with the problem
- The failure among health care professionals—especially psychiatrists, psychologists and other mental health workers—to take advantage of the importance of G-d, religion and spirituality in prevention and in their treatment of those struggling with addiction and sobriety.

"Too often, clergy and physicians, religion and science are ships passing in the night. When we separate the worlds of medicine and spirituality, we deny effective help to a host of individuals with substance abuse problems," said Califano.

The report—the first comprehensive analysis of the connection between spirituality, religion and substance abuse (including alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs)—reveals that the positive results of a religious or spiritual connection are not limited to those who attend church frequently.

"Studies show that people with strong religious beliefs are healthier, heal faster and live longer than those without them, regardless of their individual spiritual faith or spiritual practice," said Susan E. Foster, CASA's Vice President and Director of Policy Research and Analysis.

CASA calls for action to tap into the power of religion and spirituality to help prevent substance abuse and addiction and improve recovery:

- Train clergy to recognize signs of substance abuse and alcoholism and how to deal with them. Clergy should incorporate prevention and recovery messages into their ministry and become familiar with treatment services in their communities.
- Train medical professionals to recognize the importance of spirituality and take advantage of spiritual and religious resources available in their local communities.
- Conduct more research to better understand and enhance the effectiveness of faith-based prevention initiatives and treatment programs.

The full article is available at:
<http://www.casacolumbia.org/templates/PressReleases.aspx?articleid=115&zoneid=48>

Drew Hetzler, BCO, BADO

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Happy New Year



Recovery Musings: Atonement or Forgiveness

By Rabbi Ben A.

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

Forgiveness you can get all year round; Yom Kippur is primarily about atonement. Big difference. Forgiveness means that after I make my apology, I'm off the hook. Atonement means that I am engaged in hard work to restore the relationship to its original state.

The word for atonement in Hebrew is kaparah, which also means "wiping up." If I spill my grape juice on your carpet, I can say sorry and be forgiven. But the stain is still there. Atonement only comes when I get the carpet cleaners to come clean your carpet.

And this is exactly what we do in the Ninth Step. Amends are not apologies. Making amends means trying to remove

the stain, making things right again, and eventually even restoring the relationship to how it originally was. If an apology will make the person feel better, then we may include an apology in the amends. But the main thing is that we make it up to the person in a way that is significant to them.

Our amends to G-d are not an apology, but rather a sincere attempt to restore the relationship on His terms -- the way He likes it. Of course, if you just come to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say a few words, and go back to how things were, that's not much of an amend. The making of amends is a long-term project where we show the one we have harmed that we have honestly changed and changed permanently. When we behave differently all year round as a result of our Yom Kippur amends, then we are proving that we really atoned.

Reprinted from jewishrecovery.org

Miriam Karp is delighted to offer her first book to the JEEP family:

Painting Zaidy's Dream: memoir of a searching soul

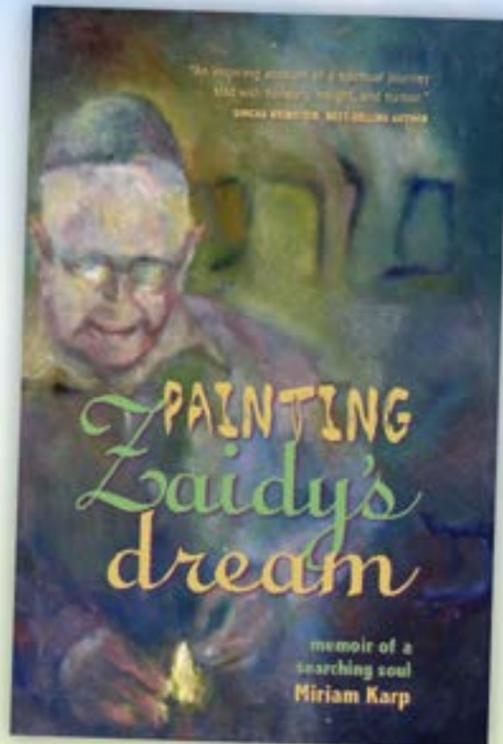
How does a nice, atheist, suburban girl become a chicken soup toting, Kabbalah quoting Chassidic mother of a large family?

Exploring issues of faith, family, the land of Israel, learning to read Hebrew as an adult, growing into Jewish spirituality and more - in a humorous, poignant and down-to-earth woman's voice.

She is Pure, Chapter 29, won first place, American Jewish Press Association Rockower Award for Excellence in Writing About Women. Judges noted, "...beautiful, spiritual, personal... Her pacing is exquisite, leaves the reader awed."

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Cincinnati Jewish Recovery update



Update Spring/Summer 2013

Cincinnati Jewish Recovery continues to foster a warm supportive (and sometimes demanding) recovery community. A weekly meeting/class focuses on timely recovery lessons, gleaned from the weekly Torah portion or upcoming holidays. Rabbi Karp continues to provide individualized support and counseling. And our monthly holiday celebrations continue, with good food, varying themes and a warm atmosphere of friendship, meaningful recovery conversation, both humorous and serious, and networking and community building.

April: CJR's Passover seder — Journey from Slavery to Freedom, was enjoyed by 25 participants, who relished the wine-free table laden with hand-baked matzos, seder foods and traditions, and relevance of the message of freedom from our personal slavery as we strive to break free of our addictions and limitations.

Lag B'Omer — The Soul of Jewish Recovery. A CJR tradition, the Lag B'Omer BBQ and bonfire took place on a balmy spring evening, with burgers, hot dogs and sides, songs, stories, and sharing around the bonfire. The "Rosh Hashana of Kabbalah" provided plenty of spiritual insights designed to strengthen our recovery.

May: "Keep lighting the flame of the soul until it's burning on its own" Sober Shabbos Dinner. The Recovery discussion focused on the menorah. We work on lighting up ourselves and our friends, giving our fire, warmth and support until we can not only stay lit, but illuminate others. A thoughtful discussion and sharing was accompanied by a delicious Shabbos Dinner.

July: "Joy breaks all boundaries." Our Friday night dinners are often punctuated with spontaneous laughter, as those in recovery relish the light that comes after wrestling with their darkness. But this month the laughter was a main feature. Everyone came prepared with plenty of clean Jewish jokes and personal experiences worth a chuckle. The laughter, jokes, stories and spin-offs created an especially enjoyable evening. "Addictions and recovery aren't funny," one man insisted. "They're not," a friend answered, "but finding humor and joy in our struggles and victories greases our inner machinery and gives us strength and hope."

August: "Seeing G-d's Blessing: Challah Baking from Scratch" Miriam's homemade challah is one of the centerpieces of the CJR Shabbos meals, so this time we spread the wealth and fun all around. Thursday evening challah baking made everyone into an expert. We rolled up our sleeves, mixed and kneaded the dough, fulfilled the mitzvah of separating challah, shaped and braided the loaves and sat down together to enjoy a light meal as

the challahs baked. Inspired by recovery insights and our shared experience, strength and hope we now added the special joy of having created something meaningful with own hands. At the end of the evening, everyone left for home with an all-in-one gift bag for Friday night: fresh challah, Kiddush cup, grape juice, Shabbos candles and a recipe to use for many more delicious challahs.

This month's Jewish Recovery event...

Bagels in the Big Box: Celebrating Jewish Unity

Sunday, Sept 22, 11:00AM

Join us for bagels, lox and discussion in the Sukkah:
How the joy and unity of Sukkos can strengthen our recovery.

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Chai Walking Club

WALKING, THE HEALTHY ADDICTION! Send us your miles! We are now at 18,352 miles. Get peace of mind and a better body, for free.

- The Duke University Medical Center found that a brisk 30-minute walk or jog around a track three times a week was just as effective as antidepressant medication in relieving the symptoms of major depression in middle-aged and elderly people.
 - A study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine last year showed that older women who walked regularly were less likely to develop memory loss and other declines in mental function than women who were less active. Those who walked 18 miles or more per week fared best.
- Walking one mile a day burns 100 calories. You could lose ten pounds in a year without changing your eating habits.
- A recent Harvard study shows that walking at a moderate pace (3mph) for up to 3 hours a week — or 30 minutes a day — can cut the risk of heart disease in women by as much as 40%.
 - The October 20, 1999 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that one hour of brisk walking every day can cut a woman's risk of developing Type 2 diabetes in half.

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