



A HANUKKAH BLESSING

Alex and Cyd Weissman

Here I am, ready and prepared to light the Hanukkah candles, as “our rabbis taught:

The law of Hanukkah demands that everyone should light one lamp for themselves and for their household. Those who seek to fulfil the obligation well have a lamp lit for every member of the household (from Shabbat 21b).” We know we could be a household that celebrates the light of one. Instead, we remind ourselves that light increases with the opportunity for each of us to celebrate with our own Chanukiah. May we dedicate ourselves in all our days to honoring each other’s unique light, as it shines through the miracle of our gender and sexual differences. May our homes become homes of light for all people (adapted from Isaiah 56:7).

In preparation for Hanukkah, a time in the year when we welcome in the light of hope and liberation, we asked Alex Weissman and his mom Cyd to write a blessing celebrating LGBTQ people and families.

Cyd and Alex are quite the mother/son Jewish duo. Alex is an out queer rabbinical student at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the former Social Justice Coordinator at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, and a leading LGBTQ Jewish voice for justice. A longtime leader in Jewish education and advocate for LGBT inclusion, Cyd infused her children’s life with Jewish content that reflected their family’s values, from modeling how to hold space as a ritual leader for her son—the future rabbi, to sending her children out into the world

with her own take on the Priestly Blessing: “May God bless you and keep you safe and sound.”

When we asked Alex to tell us more about his Jewish experience growing up, he explained: “My mom used to teach my friends and me at religious school. She was always (and still is) intent on ‘whole person’ learning. It didn’t matter if we could just recite *Ashrei*—she wanted to make sure we could also articulate the joy of dwelling in the house of God and what that felt like.”

We share their blessing with you today in the same spirit of “whole person” Judaism that Cyd passed on to Alex. May it be that this year, as we gather our families to kindle the lights of Hanukkah, we do so in wholeness and holiness.

For more about our program for parents and family member of LGBTQ Jews, visit keshetonline.org/supportfamilies



Keshet is a national organization that works for full LGBTQ equality and inclusion in Jewish life.