



We wish
our
readers
Chag
Sameach
ve Kasher.

south african Jewish Report

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Shoppers checking out
the dried fruit stand
at the Tel Aviv Carmel
Market. (Ben Sales/JTA)

Shopping for Pesach in Tel Aviv

EDGAR BRONFMAN: Judaism should embrace 'doubters'

The pendulum between
doubters - young Jews
who openly question the
meaning and worth of a
traditional Jewish life -
and believers is swinging
further and further.



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The night ignorance and evil beat me

Berlin-based Israeli pianist
Yossi Reshef and Professor
of Music Jeanne Zaidel-
Rudolph, describe the horror
on the night of March 12,
when anti-Israel protesters
disrupted his recital at Wits
University.

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Yes, and on top of it, it's Pesachdik!

More
completely
scrumptious
recipes by
Sharon Lurie
for your seder
table.



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Abuse: The scourge which is talked about in a hushed voice

Says Glynne Zackon of the
Chevrah Kadisha social Ser-
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Jewish community we don't
have abuse. However, in our
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Karabus may finally be coming home

The medical committee
appointed by an Abu
Dhabi judge to inves-
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exonerated renowned
77-year-old paediatric
oncologist Prof Cyril
Karabus.

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PLEASE NOTE:
Owing to
Yomtov, there is
**no issue of the
Jewish Report
next week.**

**The next issue
will be on the
streets on
April 5.**



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In every generation

Pesach message by Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein

In 1947, David Ben-Gurion famously said at the United Nations: “Three hundred years ago a ship called The Mayflower left for the New World... Is there a single Englishman who knows the exact date and hour of the Mayflower’s launch... do they know how many people were in the boat? Their names? What they wore? What they ate?...”

“More than 3 300 years before the Mayflower set sail, the Jews left Egypt. Any Jewish child, whether in America or Russia, Yemen or Germany, knows that his forefathers left Egypt at dawn on the 15th of Nissan... Their belts were tied and their staffs were in their hands.

“They ate matzot and arrived at the Red Sea after seven days... Jews worldwide still eat matzah for seven days from the 15th of Nissan, and retell the story of the Exodus, concluding with a fervent wish ‘Next year in Jerusalem’. This is the nature of the Jewish people.”

It is at the Pesach seder that these powerful facts of Jewish history are relayed - the facts which lay the foundation for our vision and values contained in the Torah and expressed through the mitzvot.

The Pesach seder has a special



place in the hearts of Jews across the world. More than 80 per cent of Jews in Israel participate in some form of Pesach seder; and in South Africa the figure is more than 90 per cent.

The power of the Pesach seder goes way beyond statistics. The seder is in our hearts because it is at the heart of Judaism and the future of the Jewish people; it is that time of the year when one generation hands over to the next the history, vision and values of what it means to be a Jew.

How does the seder ensure that the facts and values of our Divine

mission are conveyed from one generation to the next? The clue is the “mah nishtanah” - the famous four questions. If you look carefully in the haggadah, you will find that these questions are not answered immediately, and some are only answered indirectly.

The inescapable conclusion is that in a certain fundamental sense the questions are more important than the answers and that the Pesach seder is not merely a history lesson dictating dry facts to the new generation.

The questions symbolise an active and lively interaction, which aims to nurture an open and loving atmosphere. The seder is a dynamic dialogue, not a monologue, because it is conveying the very essence of who we are and what our purpose is on earth.

G-d has designed the seder to be a space and a forum where the facts, values and vision of Judaism are transmitted from one generation to the next in the context of the bonds of love.

The Pesach seder with its potential to uplift and inspire families, can be a model for Jewish life in general. It is in the hearts of so many Jews

across the globe because we intuitively understand its vital importance for a vibrant Jewish future.

The seder is a call to Jewish families for how to live our lives. It teaches us all how we need to make time and space for one another in order to discuss and to debate the most important dimensions of what it means to be a Jew.

Just as on the seder night when families sit together to discuss the big ideas of what it means to be a Jew, so too can we do that all year round, making time for each other. Let’s do it at the Shabbos table and during the week by learning Torah together.

Let the dynamic conversations continue beyond the seder. Let families talk to each other, discussing and understanding what it means to be a Jew, our values, our faith, who we are, where we come from, our values, our vision for the future.

Gina and I wish the entire community a joyous Pesach filled with Hashem’s greatest blessings.

• *The Chief Rabbi has published a Pesach video message expanding on the themes discussed in this article. See www.chiefrabbi.co.za*

A book all about values for today

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein has recently visited Israel and London and will be travelling to America next month, in part to promote his new book, “The Legacy: Teachings for Life from the Great Lithuanian Rabbis”, which he has written in collaboration with Rabbi Berel Wein. It is published by Maggid books under the Koren imprint in Jerusalem and New Milford.

Rabbi Goldstein told the Jewish

News Service: “This book has, I believe, an important message for the Jewish world today. The American Jewish community, outside of Israel, is the major Jewish community of the world, so if this book has an important, relevant message for Jews today, I want to try and get that message out.

“The book is not about history or geography, it’s really about values for today, and I seek to articulate certain key values for the Jewish people today, such as the importance of derech erez

(appropriate behaviour), and character, and decency, and ethics.”

The book, while already available in local Jewish bookstores, will be launched officially in South Africa in June, to coincide with Sinai Indaba. Said Rabbi Goldstein, “This is an important book for our community. We launched it overseas before we launched it locally because the publishing house is based in Israel and the States and because Rabbi Wein is US-based.”



Shabbat and Yomtov Times			
March 22 / 11 Nissan March 23 / 12 Nissan Parshat Tzav		Tuesday March 26 / 15 Nissan First Night Pesach: Candle-lighting (from a pre-existing flame)	
17:59	18:47	Johannesburg	
18:15	19:27	Cape Town	
17:47	18:36	Durban	
18:06	18:55	Bloemfontein	
18:05	18:59	Port Elizabeth	
18:00	18:49	East London	
Monday March 25 / 14 Nissan Erev Pesach: Candle-lighting		Wednesday March 27 / 16 Nissan Second Night Pesach: Yomtov ends	
17:56		Johannesburg	
18:15		Cape Town	
17:44		Durban	
18:03		Bloemfontein	
18:05		Port Elizabeth	
17:56		East London	
March 29 / 18 Nissan March 30 / 19 Nissan Shabbat Chol HaMoed Pesach		Sunday March 31 / 20 Nissan Sixth Day Pesach: Candle-lighting	
17:51	18:39	Johannesburg	
18:15	17:18	Cape Town	
17:39	18:28	Durban	
17:58	18:47	Bloemfontein	
17:59	18:49	Port Elizabeth	
17:50	18:40	East London	
Monday April 1 / 21 Nissan Seventh Day Pesach: Candle-lighting (from a pre-existing flame)		Tuesday April 2/ 22 Nissan Eighth Day Pesach: Yomtov ends	
18:37		Johannesburg	
19:15		Cape Town	
18:25		Durban	
18:44		Bloemfontein	
18:47		Port Elizabeth	
18:37		East London	

KASHRUT ALERT

‘KOSHER FOR PASSOVER’ SHELVES

The kashrut division of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues advises that the “Pesach section” in retail stores is not under Beth Din supervision.

Beth Din certification extends only to the products, and it has no control over how independent retailers pack their shelves. The community should check labels very carefully to ensure that products are properly certified for Pesach.

Kosher World is certified by the kashrut division and the Pesach shelves have been checked at this store.

PESACH GUIDE

The Beth Din Pesach Guide is now available on the Beth Din’s website. There you will find:

- Product/cosmetic/medicine lists
 - Pet food list
 - Laws of cooking on Shabbat and Yomtov
 - Information on chametz, bedikat chametz, burning of chametz
 - Kitniyot, kitniyot derivatives, “egg matzah”
 - Kashering instructions and practical A-Z applications
 - Seder requirements
 - Zmanim (times/dates) for Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, East London, Plettenberg Bay
 - Some laws of sefirat ha’omer
 - Sale of chametz forms or online sale option
 - Q&A on Pesach 2012
- The hard copy of the guide is sponsored by Pick n Pay and is available in selected Pick n Pay stores.

IMPORTED PRODUCTS

Some imported products, especially from Israel, carry a valid Pesach hechsher but contain kitniyot or kitniyot derivatives. The custom among Ashkenazim is not to consume kitniyot.

Products bearing the OU or Star-K hechsher which are “kosher for Pesach”, will have the letter “P” adjacent to the logo. The “P” is for Pesach, not Parev.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

- All Lancewood white cheeses marked “kosher for Passover” are Chalav Yisrael, although not marked as such.
- The following Clover butters are “kosher for Pesach” in the following brands. They do not have a Pesach sticker and are not Chalav Yisrael:
 - Mooiriver - salted butter
 - Springbok - unsalted butter
- Coca Cola and Diet Coke cans are being imported from Israel. They will be available in packs of 24 from various Pick n Pay, Checkers and Spar stores from this week.
- Genadendal frozen oven-baked chips are “Kosher for Passover” when bearing the words “Kosher for Passover” or “Passover” next to the sell-by date.

jewish report

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Mastermind in Daniel Pearl slaying arrested

OWN CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD - A Pakistani man was arrested last weekend in a covert operation in Karachi, for the gruesome kidnap and subsequent murder in 2002 of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl (pictured).
Officials suspect Qari Abdul Hayee facilitated Pearl’s kidnapping.
At the time of his death Pearl had been in Karachi researching a story about militants and terrorism.
He was later decapitated and a video of his killing was sent to US officials.

In addition to showing violent footage of Pearl’s death, the video also showed Pearl discussing his Jewish heritage and making propaganda statements, apparently under duress.
The tape began with the correspondent saying: “My name is Daniel Pearl. I’m a Jewish-American. My father is Jewish, my mother is Jewish. I am a Jew.”
On camera he recounted numerous family visits to Israel.
On the tape, the group that claimed responsibility for Pearl’s abduction - the National Movement for the Restoration of Pakistan’s Sovereignty - demanded that Pakistanis being held by the United States at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, be released.

The group also demanded an end to the US presence in Pakistan, as well as the delivery of F-16 fighter jets, which Pakistan purchased from the United States but never received.
Hayee was arrested last Sunday in a paramilitary operation targeting militants in Karachi. “It was a covert operation based on intelligence information,” a Pakistani official said, adding that troops also recovered weapons during the raid.
Hayee joins several other suspects who have been arrested in connection with Pearl’s kidnapping and murder. Ahmad Omar Saeed Sheikh, a British-born Islamic militant, was sentenced to death by hanging by an anti-terrorism court in Hyderabad in connection with Pearl’s murder.

Three accomplices received life sentences, which in Pakistan usually means 25 years.
In 2003, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed - who is also a suspected mastermind of the 9/11 attacks on the United States - was arrested in Pakistan and has confessed to killing Pearl.
Pearl’s death should be a global wake-up call about “a vast and international network of terrorists”, his widow, told CNN weeks after her husband’s death. “His spirit, his faith and his conviction have not been defeated.”



Israeli government coalition, after twists and turns

ALEX TRAIMAN/JNS.ORG
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has finally assembled a governing coalition following nearly six weeks of negotiations.
The Israeli government coalition includes Netanyahu’s ruling Likud-Beiteinu party - an alignment between Likud and Avigdor Lieberman’s Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home) party, 31 seats; Yesh Atid (There is a Future), a centrist party led by television celebrity Yair Lapid, 19 seats; HaBayit HaYehudi (Jewish Home) led by hi-tech magnate Naftali Bennett, 12 seats; and Hatnuah (The Movement) led by former Kadima Chairman Tzipi Livni, six seats.

The 68-member strong parliamentary majority is now tasked with tackling Israel’s vast diplomatic, security and socio-economic challenges for as long as they can agree to remain together in the Israeli government.
“This is not the government that Prime Minister Netanyahu preferred to form, however, the end of the negotiation process was determined by the negotiators,” Dr Dan Avnon, professor of political science at Hebrew University, told JNS.org.
It is widely known, according to Avnon, that Netanyahu preferred to form an Israeli government together with the ultra-Orthodox parties Shas and United Torah Judaism.
But an alliance between Yesh Atid and HaBayit HaYehudi - that proved to be



Photo: Kobi Gideon/GPO/FLASH90

Israeli Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets Israeli President Simon Peres last Saturday in Jerusalem, to inform Peres that he has formed an Israeli government coalition with the Yesh Atid, Jewish Home and Movement parties.
the largest surprise of the Israeli elections season - forced Netanyahu to take both parties into the Israeli government coalition to the exclusion of the ultra-Orthodox, or go to new elections.
Advancing the peace process may be the major sticking point of the Israeli government coalition. While Yesh Atid and HaBayit HaYehudi appear to share many socio-economic values - including easing the cost of housing, wanting all Israeli citizens to serve in the military regardless of Torah study, and efficient governance - the two parties appear to differ sharply on the issue of furthering a Palestinian state.
HaBayit HaYehudi chairman Bennett has come out staunchly against the creation of such a state, offering instead a plan to formally annex most of the territories of Judea and Samaria, commonly referred to as the West Bank.
Lapid has spoken out openly about a desire to divorce Israel from the Palestinians. Also added into the political mix is Tzipi Livni, who actively campaigned for the immediate resumption of negotiations with Palestinians, and was placed in charge of such processes in the upcoming government under the direction of the Prime Minister. (JNS.org)

Obama says he’s in ‘historic homeland of Jewish people’

JERUSALEM - Presenting a contrast to his Cairo speech four years ago - during which he said that Israel was born from the Holocaust - President Barack Obama arrived in Israel on Wednesday and emphasised the historic link of the Jewish people to the Holy Land.
Obama opened his third visit to Israel, but his first as president, by stressing the “rebirth” of Israel as the historic Jewish homeland.
“We stand together because peace must come to the Holy Land,” Obama said on the tarmac of Ben-Gurion International Airport, according to Israel Hayom.
“I know that in stepping foot on this land, I walk with you on the historic homeland of the Jewish people,” he said.
Obama added: “More than 3 000 years ago, the Jewish people lived here, tended

the land here, prayed to G-d here. And after centuries of exile and persecution, unparalleled in the history of man, the founding of the Jewish state of Israel, was a rebirth, a redemption, unlike any in history.
“Today, the sons of Abraham and the daughters of Sarah are fulfilling the dream of the ages: to be masters of their own fate in their own sovereign state. Just as we have for these past 65 years, the United States is proud to stand with you as your strongest ally and your greatest friend.”
The US “stands with Israel because it is in our fundamental security interest,” Obama said, citing that as the reason why America “was the very first nation” to recognise Israel 65 years ago.
Naftali Bennett, Israel’s new economy and trade minister, said Obama’s speech was “important because it recognises the deep

historical connection between the people of Israel and the Land of Israel.”
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the occasion of Obama’s arrival in Israel, a “historic moment.”
“I come here today with a simple message. Thank you,” Netanyahu told Obama, adding, “The people of Israel are honoured to have you visit.”
Netanyahu said he hoped that Obama in Israel would “get to see a different side of this tiny land.”
“I look forward to working with you over the next four years,” said Netanyahu, whose relationship with Obama has reportedly been tense at times due to disagreements over issues such as the setting of a “red line” for the Iranian nuclear threat and Israeli construction beyond the 1967 Green Line. (JNS.org)



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Passover - Israel style

JUDY LASH BALINT/JNS.ORG
JERUSALEM

Not every Israeli observes Passover, but every Israeli knows Passover is coming.

Preparations for the seven-day holiday are impossible to ignore and encroach on almost every facet of life in the weeks leading up to seder night.

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reveals that 88 per cent of Israelis will take part in a seder and 47 per cent will eat only "kosher for Passover" items during the holiday.

As for Israel's army, some 200 IDF chaplains, including reservists, are pressed into service to commence the massive task of koshering the hundreds of kitchens, mess halls and eating corners used by soldiers at bases all over the country.

Says Rabbi Zev Roness, a captain in the Armoured Training School: "It's a whole operation... The army prepares more than a month before Passover to ensure that all of the army kitchens meet the highest 'ko-



Photo: IDF Spokesperson's Office

Preparing the IDF for Passover.

sher-for Passover' standards."Street scenes in Israel change every day before Passover according to what's halachically necessary: Several days before the seder, young men wielding blow-torches preside over huge vats of boiling water stationed every few blocks on the street and in the courtyard of every mikveh.

The lines to dunk metal utensils

start to grow every day, and at the last minute before the seder, blow-torches are at the ready to cleanse every last gram of chametz from oven racks and stove tops lugged through the streets by kids or overwrought mothers.

Prominent newspaper ads from Israel's Energy Ministry feature dire warnings about the dangers inherent in cleaning gas burners. The text of the ads advises on the minutiae of taking apart the metal covers to get at that last bit of chametz.

No alarm clock is needed in the pre-Passover period - clanging garbage trucks do the trick as they roll through the neighbourhood every morning during the two weeks before Passover to accommodate all the refuse from the furious cleaning going on.

Two days before the Seder, there's the annual pickup of oversized items and appliances. Dozens of antiquated computer monitors and old toaster ovens stand forlornly next to the garbage bins.

The day before Passover, families seek out empty lots to burn the remainder of their chametz gleaned from the previous night's meticulous search. The city is dotted with sputtering fires despite ads posted by the Jerusalem municipality announcing the location of official chametz burning bins and banning fires in any other areas.

Most flower shops stay open all night for the two days before Passover, working feverishly to complete the orders that will grace the nation's seder tables.

Observant Jews mark the seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot by carrying out some of the laws of mourning - one of these is the prohibition against cutting hair. As a result, barber and beauty shops are jammed with customers in the pre-Passover days.

Mailboxes overflow with appeals from a myriad organisations helping the poor. Newspapers are



Photo: Judy Lash Balint

Koshering underway on a Jerusalem street.

replete with articles about altruistic Israelis who volunteer by the hundreds in the weeks before the holiday to collect, package and distribute Passover supplies to the needy.

In Jerusalem alone, more than 40 restaurants close a few days before Passover. They clean out their kitchens, revamp their menus and open up with rabbinic supervision for the holiday to serve "kosher for Passover" meals to tourists as well as the hordes that are sick of cooking after the seder.

At the entrance to many large supermarkets, teenagers hand out flyers listing suggested items generous shoppers may purchase to be placed in bins for distribution to needy families.

Since most of the country is on vacation for the entire week of Passover, all kinds of entertainment and trips are on offer. The annual Boombamela beach festival, kid's activities at the Bloomfield Science Museum, concerts in Hebron, explorations at the City of David, solidarity excursions to the Shomron and music festivals at the Dead Sea are all popular. The popular Hebrew Bananagram game has even invented a special Passover version with points for words in the haggadah.

The Passover theme of freedom and exodus in Israel even extends to criminals. Israel Radio announces that 700 prisoners will get a furlough to spend the holiday with family.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Israel's fishmongers will sell 1 100 tons of carp, 80 tons of St Peters fish and 300 tons of mullet this Passover season to satisfy the

tastes of gefilte fish lovers, as well as the Moroccan-style chraime fish eaters.

In every ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood, men and boys block the narrow streets with hand trucks piled high with sacks of carrots, potatoes and oranges and cartons of eggs - all courtesy of the Kimcha D'Pischa funds that funnel donations from abroad to Israeli haredim.

At the entrance to many large supermarkets, teenagers hand out flyers listing suggested items generous shoppers may purchase to be placed in bins for distribution to needy families.

Israel's chief rabbis sell the nation's chametz to one Hussein Jabar, a Muslim Arab resident of Abu Ghosh. Estimated worth: \$150 billion secured by a down payment of NIS 100 000. Jabar took over the task some 16 years ago, after the previous buyer, also from Abu Ghosh, was fired when it was discovered his maternal grandmother was Jewish.

At the Kotel, workers perform the twice-yearly ritual (pre-Passover and pre-Rosh Hashanah) of removing thousands of personal notes stuffed into the crevices of the Kotel, prior to burying them on the Mount of Olives.

Finally, the end of Passover is marked by the festive Maimouna, a traditional holiday celebrated by North African Jews immediately following Passover.

In recent years, Maimouna has become a national day marked by music, eating sweets and pastries and political glad-handing before everyone heads back to work until the fast-approaching season of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day and Jerusalem Day. (JNS.org)

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PARADE AND FAIR

Signs are that Prof Karabus may finally be coming home

ROBYN SASSEN

Professor Cyril Karabus, detained in Dubai since August last year, may finally be coming home! He expected to know his fate on Thursday (March 21), after Jewish Report’s Wednesday deadline.

There has been a breakthrough in that a medical committee appointed by a judge to investigate the issue, had given the renowned 77-year-old paediatric oncologist a clean bill of health. The judge was on Thursday to consider whether he accepted the committee’s findings.

Prof Karabus has been detained in Abu Dhabi on accusations of manslaughter and fraud, in the death of a three-year-old terminally ill cancer patient, when he worked as a locum there some 10 years ago. He had been tried for and found guilty in absentia and without his knowledge and was detained while on his way home to South Africa after attending his son, Michael’s wedding in Canada.

Said a cautiously relieved Michael Bagraim, Karabus’ lawyer, from Cape Town on Wednesday: “I am still holding my breath. They are in court tomorrow (Thursday).

“Under normal circumstances,” Bagraim emphasised, particularly

given that the judge himself appointed the committee in question, “there would be no likelihood of this being rejected.”

But the nightmarish events surrounding Karabus’ arrest at the Dubai Airport last August and the Kafkaesque series of delays that have kept him in Abu Dhabi ever since, have been far from normal too. The case has been postponed 18 times, with the prosecution not able to produce the necessary documentation on the little girl’s death.

“He sounded quite chirpy, happy in fact,” Bagraim commented on how he found Karabus’ state of mind when he spoke to him on Wednesday.

Iqbal Survé, leading Cape Town businessman, philanthropist, medical doctor and social entrepreneur, who chairs the Sekunjalo Investment Group, and a former medical student of Karabus, decided to help the situation.

He approached Bagraim for advice. “I told him to focus on getting that medical committee to meet. I believe he was instrumental in bringing about this decision.”

Survé visited Abu Dhabi two weeks ago, for a few days. “He didn’t try to influence their decisions, he simply asked them to get things



Cyril Karabus

together.

There has also been considerable support from people all over the world as well as the local community. Over his 40-year career as a paediatric oncologist, Karabus played a key role in caring for members of the coloured and Muslim communities of Cape Town.

“I have had a weekly slot on Channel Islam for some two months,” added Bagraim. “The local Muslim community has been strongly supporting Karabus’ return and the listenership of the radio station is praying for the safe return of this man who has saved so many of their children and returned them to good health.”

In addition, among others, an

Arabic-speaking Jewish London-based paediatric oncologist who has a practice in Harley Street, Eddie Duek, has been proactive in speaking to his own contacts in Dubai. “People from all walks of life have been coming forward to do what they can.”

It was great relief that Sarah, Karabus’ daughter felt when she heard the news, but her relief was not untainted with caution. “Only until he is on a plane will we believe it. It is not yet a done deal.”

Should all go well, Bagraim was still not comfortable to speculate when Karabus would be returned home. “That is what we are currently working on. Hopefully he will be here in time for Pesach.”



Michael Bagraim

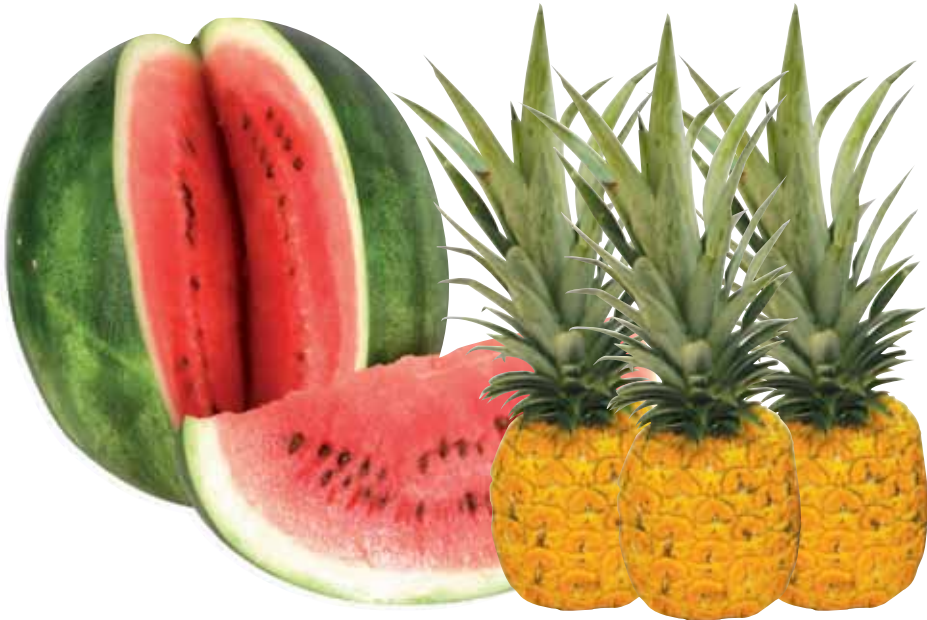


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Wits: a place of learning or hooliganism?

A good university teaches students professional skills for their careers. But just as important, it is a forum which stimulates discourse and where one is exposed to diverse views and learns tolerance for the views of others.

The University of the Witwatersrand was established in 1922, and over nine decades has produced graduates in numerous fields and has grown into a top-class institution of higher learning.

All over the world, thousands of alumni remember it not just for academic excellence and vibrant student life, but also its gutsy anti-apartheid atmosphere in the worst days of apartheid in the 1960s, ‘70s and ‘80s. It was a bastion of activism among students and faculty alike, many of whom took great personal risks against the regime, which wanted to silence their voices by any means. Some paid for it through arrests, bannings and beatings. Jews played a not insignificant part in these protests.

People remember the dignified lines of white students standing on Jan Smuts Avenue alongside the campus with posters protesting against apartheid, and being involved in a myriad projects to oppose the system and help its victims.

Politics was everywhere, whether you were studying engineering, music, sociology or something else. Apartheid stared you in the face constantly.

What happened on Wits’ campus last Tuesday evening, when hooligan students stormed the concert of Berlin-based Israeli pianist Yossi Reshef like a pack of baying hyenas frantic for blood, causing the concert to be aborted and the pianist escorted out by security, was antithetical to the university’s proud history – a disgrace.

The idea that if you cannot sway your adversary by thoughtful discourse and cogent argument, you will do it by force is something you expect in a third-rate dictatorship, not in a superior place of learning in a country with the world’s best Constitution.

Heated debate is intrinsic to a good university - about politics, religion, art and everything else. Condemning Israel and conducting a campaign against it is a perfectly legitimate action within the parameters of this ethos, even if it offends others.

This is true even if protesters know little about the “Israel” they are condemning. For students, getting riled up about something one knows nothing about is part of the learning process. It is up to Israel’s supporters to argue back with clarity and fact.

In the old days, Wits was also a “Jewish” campus. There were so many Jewish students and professors that Jewish issues - including Israel - were part of the fabric. And many of those Jews were in the forefront of the anti-apartheid struggle. They didn’t just kick in doors like the thugs who shut down Yossi Reshef’s concert.

It goes without saying that Wits should have provided adequate security for the concert. But how ironical it is that security guards were necessary to “guarantee” freedom of speech at an institution which fought so hard for freedom of speech during apartheid - a sad indictment of what Wits has become. It must teach its students about dignified debate; that using force is not acceptable.

Can a university let its soul be stolen like this? If this shameful incident is allowed to become a benchmark of what is permissible at Wits, or even seen as a student prank, alarm bells must ring loud.

It goes way beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Yossi Reshef. It is about Wits as an institution of excellence. And the right and duty for academic freedom, which is why students go there - to be exposed to different views and to learn from it.

Today, Jewish alumni look with anger and disillusionment at what has become of their alma mater. We are not talking about some isolated bush college, but a jewel in South Africa’s higher education system. It is tragic for Wits’ name to be associated with such behaviour.

We wait with bated breath to see what action will be taken by the Wits leadership to repair the damage to its reputation, what example will be made of the perpetrators. It is not enough to say they were just a rowdy group of troublemakers who don’t represent what the university stands for. Wits is responsible for what happens on its campus.

Yossi Reshef: The night ignorance and evil beat me

Israeli-born pianist YOSSI RESHEF recounts his harrowing experience and profound sadness last week Tuesday at the Wits Atrium, when student thugs forced him to abandon his recital after 15 minutes.



The sight before me on the evening of March 12, 2013 was one I will never forget. As I was trying to overcome the sound of noise, singing and vuvuzelas coming from the outside with Ludwig van Beethoven’s “Tempest” Sonata, I was already feeling quite ill from stress.

The moment the perpetrators broke in [to the hall] was somewhat of a relief; at that moment I could stop this fight knowing they had beaten me. Never before as an artist did I ever feel that I needed to fight evil and ignorance but here I was forced to confront a moment in my life where I had to face ugliness and chaos. The music stopped, chaos prevailed.

A classical pianist schedules performances months (sometimes years) in advance. This tour was planned a long time ago after months of hard work and preparation on both my side and that of the organisers.

The Israeli Embassy took no active part, but assistance was offered by Tararam, the South African/Israel Culture Fund, solely with my airfares. Anyone who knows the cost of coming to South Africa and the relatively low fees paid, would understand my gratitude when offered this assistance.

I also felt that it was important for me and for the organisers to show another side of Israel - that of culture - which is not often portrayed in the media. I was warned that there might be protests, but at no point was an “Israel Apartheid Week” (a ridiculous idea in itself, as Israel is one of the world’s finest democracies) mentioned.

At no point was I ever asked by anyone to postpone or cancel my performances. This fact alone proves that my concerts were a mere platform on which this organised act of violence could occur.

I am a musician, not a politician. I am an Israeli (and a very proud one), but does this make me a representative of my coun-

try’s policies? The fact that in many places it is mentioned that I live in Germany (and I am very happily making music there) seems to have no relevance. Had I been living in Tel Aviv, would that have justified any of these protests?

It is also quite obvious that the perpetrators are fully unaware of my activities which support dialogue and the peace process in the Middle East, among them my eight-year coaching of Israeli and Arab students (Palestinian, Syrian, Jordanian and so on) in the “Playing for Peace” project organised by the Apple Hill Chamber Centre in New Hampshire, USA and my concerts with an Egyptian pianist as part of the European Mozart Academy.

However, this clearly made no difference to those bent on disrupting my performances simply because I originate from Israel.

My mission as I see it, is to deal with beauty. I spend most of my waking hours trying to decipher the meaning and content of the great masterpieces, their technical solutions, and their metaphysical realm.

Interrupting with the sound of vuvuzelas at the very end of a Beethoven sonata, one of humanity’s greatest treasures, is no less than a clash of cultures. The violence and hatred seen in the perpetrators’ eyes is something I will never forget.

I feel more hurt for the many people who came to the concert than for myself. An artist can earn no greater honour than the people who display their gratitude by coming to listen to him. And for this, in fact I am thankful.

I am thankful for all the support I received during this tour, and I want to return to this beautiful country once again to play my music.

On my concert in Stellenbosch, three days later, heavy security was put outside the hall. The demonstrators were already confronted by some of the concert-goers and the concert took place without interruption. I feel there is still hope.

Israel faces long-term instability on its borders

**BEN SALES
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Three weeks ago, militants in Gaza landed a rocket near the Israeli city of Ashkelon.

Two weeks ago, Egypt raised its state of emergency in the Sinai Peninsula, warning of an increase in jihadist activity there.

Last week, a rock thrown by a West Bank Palestinian critically injured a three-year-old Israeli girl.

And this week, Israel plans to ask the United States for support should it strike Syrian weapons convoys en-route to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Along both its northern and southern frontiers, Israel faces more political instability than it has in decades - conditions that some security experts fear could open a door to greater terrorism.

The upheavals of the Arab Spring may have reduced the threat of a conventional war with a neighbouring state, but the prospects for peaceful borders - let alone full normalisation with the Arab world - have dimmed, forcing Israeli military planners to prepare for long-term uncertainty.

“For the first time in decades, we have four active borders that have terror activities: Lebanon, Syria, Sinai and Gaza,” said Maj Gen Aviv Kochavi, director of military intelligence for the Israel Defence Forces.

“The change that’s happening is deep and foundational. The central characteristic of this change, even if it seems banal, is instability and uncertainty.”

Kochavi was speaking last week at the Herzliya Conference, an



Photo: Mahfouz Abu Turk/FLASH90/JTA

Palestinians protesting against the Assad regime and waving Free Syrian Army flags at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem, on February 1.

elite policy and security gathering dominated this year by concerns about terrorist activity on Israel’s frontiers. Kochavi said terrorists were “filling the vacuum” of unstable states. While the consequences have been minimal, officials say the danger of an attack is growing.

“Not a week goes by, not to say hardly a day, when I don’t have to deal with an issue that you didn’t even hear about, that could have resulted in a strategic threat,” IDF Chief of Staff Benny Gantz told the conference.

Of particular concern to defence officials is the Syrian border, beyond which a civil war has been raging for two years -- one that is threatening to spill over.

Israel has begun building a fence on the perimeter of the Golan Heights and in January bombed a weapons convoy it feared was being shipped from Syria to Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon.

‘Freedom of expression’ at Wits doesn’t translate into smashing windows and breaking doors: Zaidel-Rudolph

The SA Jewish Report has been granted permission to reproduce this letter by Professor Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph of Wits’ School of the Arts, which she wrote to Wits’ two vice chancellors, Professors Adam Habib and Longisa Nongxa, on the night of the piano recital on March 12, by Yossi Reshef, which was aborted due to protesting anti-Israel activists.

I have never felt so ashamed to be a Witsie tonight. The artist/pianist who lives in Berlin and carries an Israeli passport, came to Wits as one of (the Department of Music’s) scheduled concerts to give a performance in the Atrium.

Our concert organiser, Prof Malcolm Nay, acted in good faith and was assured by the acting dean, that if there were to be protests, (and it was likely that there would be), the mob would be kept behind a barrier away from the guests and audience who had paid to come and hear an international pianist of repute.

Guests and the audience arriving for the concert, were manhandled, shoved by the student protesters and utterly traumatised - some were in tears and shaking.

What values do we espouse at Wits? We talk glibly about freedom to express oneself. A protest does not mean freedom to smash windows to get into the basement, nor does it mean breaking the door to the Atrium, so that a mob can break through into the hall where a civilised classical



music concert was in progress.

The music department was assured that the public and the students at the concert would be protected. A group of well-meaning but utterly helpless security guards could not control the mob.

Our music students were traumatised by the swearing, threats and intimidations in the Atrium when the mob burst

in screaming and with vuvuzelas and went berserk.

Is this the kind of freedom for which Wits stands? Is this the kind of message that Wits sends out to the public - that if we don’t like something we are entitled to disrupt and destroy it? Of course the concert had to stop. This was not a political rally - it was a concert.

As much as the students had a right to a peaceful protest, so did the concert have a right to take place.

To have cancelled the concert because the SRC were pulling down posters is NO answer to the values for which Wits stands. The greatest part of my life has been dedi-

cated to Wits as a lecturer and then later as professor over 36 years. I have NEVER been so devastated as tonight, that the public should see the kind of hooliganism that went on, on our campus, or seen such barbaric behaviour with no control from Wits’ side whatsoever.

How can the public ever feel safe at Wits, ever again? If Wits cannot protect the public, how will we survive the kind of utterly negative sentiment that will spread like wildfire in the media?

To say nothing, of course, of Wits’ public

donors. The SRC have to be held accountable and so does Wits who failed miserably to protect the public and its own students. We expect a disciplinary hearing to take place. Photos were taken and the culprits can be identified.

I am devastated that the public, who bought tickets in good faith, should be forced to go home after only one piece of music, and carry with them the image of this great institution having gone down the tubes.

It was a catastrophe.

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Israel faces long-term instability

From page 6

The possibility that Syrian arms, including chemical weapons, could wind up in the hands of terrorist groups is among the primary security concerns facing Israel. But the threats go deeper.

As secular strongmen have vanished from the stage - first in Egypt, and potentially in Syria - Islamists are rising in their place. It’s a development that could recast the Arab-Israeli conflict in religious rather than geopolitical terms.

“We’re seeing a decline in national identity and a rise in religious identity” in the Arab world, said Dan Meridor, Israel’s outgoing minister of intelligence. “The old paradigm of war is changing its face.”

On the whole, religiously inspired terrorist groups can be difficult to deter. Generally they are less susceptible to diplomatic pressure than nation states. And unlike the dictators they appear to be replacing, the groups enjoy more popular support.

“We used to have three or four enemies,” Meridor said. “Now we have 10 000 or 20 000. Our enemies are greater and not necessarily states. How do you deter a group that’s not a state?”

Beyond the problem of deterrence is the question of victory. Israel’s recent skirmishes with terrorist groups - notably its 2006 war against Hezbollah and its 2009 and 2012 campaigns

against Hamas in Gaza - have led to something closer to stalemate than the decisive victories achieved in past conventional wars.

Lurking behind a few of the non-state actors, though, is a state with which Israelis have become all too familiar: Iran. The Islamic Republic is Hezbollah’s primary funder and one of the few remaining allies of the teetering al-Assad regime in Syria. Kochavi said Iran and Hezbollah had organised an army of 50 000 in Syria and were trying to increase their influence there.

“Iran and Hezbollah are both doing all in their power to assist al-Assad’s regime,” Kochavi said. “Iran and Hezbollah are also preparing for the day after al-Assad’s fall, when they will use this army to protect their assets and interests in Syria.”

Experts said that in the face of four insecure borders, Israel’s best bet is to stay alert and hang tough. But Danny Rothschild, director of the Interdisciplinary Centre in Herzliya’s Institute of Policy and Strategy, told the conference that Israel needed to be proactive in directing the Middle East toward peace and prosperity.

“Israel needs to be more involved in shaping the future of the region, even in a quiet way,” he said. “I have a feeling events will make it deal with issues, even if it hasn’t intended to.” (JTA)

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When ‘Swart Gevaar’ makes way for ‘Wit Gevaar’



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

Democratic politics is invariably a feral, cut-throat affair. The more democratic the society, the more this seems to be the case. In jostling for the public’s favour, political leaders frequently resort to emotive bluster, ad hominem attacks, gross hyperbole, misdirection and baseless accusations.

In dictatorships, the throat-cutting tends to take place literally, but behind closed doors, after which elections can safely be held and everyone can have the opportunity of telling the regime how much they love it. Politics in South Africa has for the greater part of the last century been dominated by race. In the bad old days, political parties made full use of “Swart Gevaar” rhetoric to scare white voters into their camp. Today, it can hardly be denied that “Wit Gevaar” tactics are to no small extent resorted to by the ruling party to keep its black supporters within the fold. In the Western Cape, ANC provincial leader Marius Frans-

man has of late been particularly blatant in playing this card. It would seem, whether defensibly or not, that broadly attacking “the whites” is regarded as acceptable in our political culture. Even so, it is understood that somewhere, a line has to be drawn. Among other things, freedom of expression does not constitute a licence to incite hostility against a particular community within the white population, whether defined along religious, linguistic, ethnic or other lines. Hence, having a go at “the Greeks” or “the Portuguese” would not be okay, at least for the time being. It was this line that Fransman crossed last month when, during an interview with Voice of the Cape, he lambasted the DA for allegedly giving building contracts that historically had been held by Muslims to Jewish businessmen.

Since the religious affiliations of those receiving the contracts should have been regarded as entirely irrelevant, why draw attention to them, and why in the context of telling a mainly Muslim audience that Muslims were being unfairly disadvantaged thereby?

After failing to get any response from Fransman’s office, the SAJBD condemned his remarks as being divisive and inflammatory and as pitting one religious community against another.

It would appear to be undeniable that his purpose was to solicit Muslim support by implying that the DA was promoting Jewish economic interests at Muslim expense. After failing to get any response from Fransman’s office, the SAJBD issued a statement condemning his remarks as being divisive and inflammatory and as pitting one religious community against another for vote-catching purposes. In response, Fransman merely escalated matters, accusing the SAJBD of being disloyal to South Africa. According to him, the SAJBD was “driving an interest outside of the national interest”; it needed to “act South African”, be “more patriotic” and ask itself whether it represented South African Jews or the Israeli government. Wantonly referring to Jewish businessmen in the context of alleging unfair allocations of building contracts can only have served to stir up economic resentment against Jews. Fransman’s subsequent charge that the SAJBD lacks loyalty to South Africa and acts on behalf of a foreign government, fosters the impression that Jews are untrustworthy

fifth columnists. Both, of course, constitute classic modes of anti-Semitic discourse. In a subsequent press statement, Fransman denounces the SAJBD for its failure to condemn both what he calls “the DA government’s policy of privileged access for established mainly white business in the Western Cape” and “human rights violations perpetuated by Israel against the Palestinians”. Since neither of these issues has anything whatsoever to do with the SAJBD’s complaint, the inference is that the SAJBD is only justified in taking a stand on behalf of Jewish civil rights once it has taken the side of his party against its political opponents and endorsed the ANC’s standpoint on the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. In other words, the Jewish community’s constitutional right to protection against anti-Jewish prejudice would appear to be conditional on its leaders first endorsing the ANC’s political and foreign policy agenda. It is hardly necessary to point out the sinister implications of such thinking. Another question that arises is why Fransman made a point of so aggressively bringing up the Israel-Palestine issue when it obviously had nothing to do with the matter at hand? In fact, it is becoming increasingly common for those accused of fostering anti-Jewish prejudice to respond with blustering and irrelevant anti-Israel rhetoric. At the core of such responses is a clear element of blackmail. The implication is that Jews in the Diaspora can only expect to be shielded from anti-Semitism if they denounce their co-religionists in Israel. It would be a mistake to simply dismiss Deputy Minister Fransman’s extraordinary diatribes against the Jewish community and its leadership as mere political grandstanding ahead of next year’s national elections. **The Jewish community’s constitutional right to protection against anti-Jewish prejudice would appear to be conditional on its leaders first endorsing the ANC’s political and foreign policy agenda.** If deliberately inciting anti-Jewish feeling is allowed to become an accepted political ploy to solicit support, Muslim or otherwise, then we will be living in a very different environment indeed. The SAJBD has now approached the SA Human Rights Commission to intervene in the matter, and whatever ruling it ultimately makes is likely to have profound implications for South African democracy.

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Judaism must embrace its ‘doubters’

EDGAR M BRONFMAN
NEW YORK

As of 2012, one in 20 Americans is identifying themselves as an atheist, agnostic or unbeliever. According to the research done by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life released last year, nearly 33 million Americans list themselves with no religious affiliation.

While it’s not specified in the Pew study how many Jews are among the ranks of the nonbelievers, doubtless the cultural landscape of Judaism is also impacted by these larger trends in Western culture. Part of the reason for this shift is the co-opting of what is perceived to be “religious” by the most conservative forces in our society. As increasingly narrow definitions of what it means to be a “believer” prevail, people with progressive social values or who openly doubt a life lived within the boundaries of strict religious practice, find themselves at increasing distances from a life defined by a religious identity.

Although I am a proud and active Jew, I count myself among those who find this definition of religiosity too constrictive. It seems the pendulum between doubters and believers is swinging further and further apart. Those who live in belief become more extreme in their views and less tolerant of any deviation from their definitions, while those who are more expansive in their views simply drop out rather than stay and fight for the legitimacy of their views. This binary approach does not move us forward. The question we must ask if we are to give serious consideration to the Jewish future, is why are the narrowest definitions winning the fight over defining Judaism? At 83, I’m unusual for my generation in my open doubting. Generally the younger the age group, the less religious they are. Millennials, specifically those born between 1990 and 1994, the youngest group of adults polled, logged in with 34 per cent religiously unaffiliated. This fits in to trends that Jewish sociologists have seen emerging throughout the late 20th century within American Judaism, where intermarriage, lack of affiliation with institutions and general alienation from Jewish life expands amid increasing assimilation. I refer to this generation as “doubters”: young Jews who openly question the meaning and worth of a traditional Jewish life. The existence of these doubters, with their hard questions about the relevancy of Judaism to their lives and removal from the community,



usually is met with alarmist cries of fear about the existence of the Jewish future that I see as unfounded. What frightens me about this information is different. It strikes me as a loss on two levels. First, the doubter allows the narrowest definition of what constitutes a religious life to dominate. Second, it is the young people self-imposing their own exile from the Jewish people.

While I feel sadness knowing our young people do not always embrace the wealth of heritage that is theirs, I also understand them. That is not to say I agree. I know what it means, however, to look at the Jewish landscape and feel that the existing options offer no home. If one needs to see that in action, look at the religious forces in Israel, where the rabinate has stifling control over a religious life defined by haredi Orthodox definitions that limit the civil rights of secular citizens.

It seems the pendulum between doubters and believers is swinging further and further apart.

It is a blessing then - of the non-religious variety - that here in America we live in a society that allows so many avenues of religious expression. (This is emerging in Israel, too, but it is far more complicated, although inroads are being made.) In my youth and young adulthood, there were unifying causes of the Jewish people - something we all stood behind jointly because we knew in our hearts it was right. We stood together against the Holocaust, for the State of Israel and to free Soviet Jewry. Such a single uniting principle allowed even those who did not see themselves inside of religion to still feel a place among our people. In modern times, however, this central cause is lost to us. The threat of anti-Semitism is not as vital as it once was for many of us - especially here in America - and the threats to Jewish lives and well-being become more and more theoretical and remote for younger Jews, especially those who distance themselves from Israel. So, what are the communal experiences that will guide us to a better Jewish future? There is a triple response here: education, positive communal experiences and unifying

causes of social justice. Jews are now secure enough, especially in America, to focus their activities on the betterment of all humanity, not just the Jewish people. Coupled with that is the need for even doubting Jews to educate themselves about their heritage and traditions. Those practices need not be limited by the most religious interpretations. Acknowledging a Judaism that embraces doubt, and that such a practice is backed by hundreds of years of Jewish thinking, is one way in which we, like our forefather Abraham, can expand our tent. It is time to be realistic

about the future of the religious and cultural heritages of Judaism. In abandoning the doubters and their tough questions, we are abandoning the hope that the legacy of our meaningful texts, beautiful rituals and unique view of the world will live on - not because we didn’t embrace religion, but because we didn’t embrace doubt. (JTA)

• Edgar M Bronfman is the president of the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, the author of “The Bronfman Haggadah” (Rizzoli, 2013) and the founding chairman of Hillel’s International Board of Governors.

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The scourge which is talked about in a hushed voice...

SHIRA DRUION

The Anti-Violence Against Women and Children campaign, has gained momentum in South Africa, largely motivated by the recent rape and murder of two young women - Anene Booysen and Reeva Steenkamp. It has left South Africans and the world ashamed of what has become of humanity.

Worldwide statistics show that one in four women is abused. More disturbing is the often silent attitude which many in the Jewish community adopt, not only as we deny that crimes of sexual abuse exist, but that, when perpetrators are exposed, they are protected and victims are labelled for “spreading gossip” and speaking out of turn, when they should “be hushing up the damage while bowing their heads in shame”.

“Fifteen years ago, domestic abuse was held down with a plug,” say Ray Wolder and Irene Zuckerman, two women who were instrumental in first exposing abuse within the community

and who have worked tirelessly to educate and empower victims and lay leaders.

Wolder and Zuckerman started a branch of the Union of Jewish Women, called Shalom Bayit, whose mandate was to assist women being abused.

“Not only was it taboo to acknowledge that abuse existed, but if one dared to speak about it and seek help, it was almost guaranteed that she would be ostracised and ‘shunned for her sins.’”

Adds Zuckerman: “I remember the first conference that took place over 15 years ago. We organised that first seminar not knowing what to expect and were completely bowled over when over 300 women pitched up.

“The turnout was obvious evidence that the issue was much more prevalent than we had realised.”

“Historically, it was believed that in the Jewish community we don’t have abuse and if it does exist, it would be mainly financial and emotional,” says Glynne Zackon, director of Chevrah Kadisha Social Services.



Photograph supplied

“However, our community is not immune to all kinds of abuse, including physical, financial, sexual, emotional and verbal. Sexual abuse is increasing.”

“Abuse is a very disturbing issue and has massive ramifications not only for the victims involved,” says psychologist Connie Valkin. “When the victims are able to break the silence and at least trust someone enough to tell, then there’s a real test as to how it is handled.

“This can often prove to be very challenging in cases where the perpetrators are family members and victims are too afraid to rock the boat and take responsibility for fragmenting the family structure. But silence is precisely what allows this scenario to persist.”

“Each person is different and while some of our clients are able to break away from their abusive situations and start new lives, there are others who are unable to, or may need a lot more time to do so,” says Zackon.

“It is our philosophy that we respect where the person is at and do not pressurise them to leave the situation or do anything they’re not comfortable with. Instead, our priority is to assess the danger of the situation and keep them safe.

“We then aim to educate, support and empower them so they can make their own decisions. Of course, if there are children involved, necessary steps need to be taken to protect them.”

Valkin says: “In my experience, when victims face the reality, speak out and claim back their dignity, it is an extremely empowering process which can be very healing; it is in fact one of the necessary steps involved when attempting to reach inner resolution.

“But often, the communal shame associated with the ‘contamination’ experienced by victims, prevents them from addressing the issue, so perpetrators are not brought to justice, and may damage more lives.

“The prevention process starts with education from a very young age. Parents should start

teaching children that their bodies belong to them and them only and they don’t have to do anything which is uncomfortable or strange, especially if mom does not know.

“Children whose ‘no’ has been respected while growing up, are more likely to stand up for themselves later in life if there is any threat of abuse.

“Power relationships are particularly vulnerable to abuse, such as secretary/boss, client/psychotherapist, doctor/patient, teacher/pupil, rabbi/congregant.

“In these relationships, the parties don’t have equal power and it can in certain cases become a perfect perpetrator/victim scenario. So, women need to be conscious of their own vulnerability and set boundaries, while males in power positions need to be held accountable by society.

“The situation is more complex with children who cannot be expected to set boundaries. Parents, therefore, have to be very vigilant, even when a child is being cared for by another adult. It is not unusual for a veil of silence to cover these issues and in our community we have to give this some deep thought.

“Perpetrators are not simply beings who were born evil; they too have their own stories, heartache and reasons that relate to their behaviour. Therapeutic treatment is well documented with fairly good results.

“But treatment is difficult to access because of the silence that surrounds these matters and the fear of legal process.”

Adds Zackon: “It is difficult to generalise when it comes to perpetrators of abuse. Some don’t want to behave in an abusive manner and are deeply ashamed of their behaviour and are more likely to seek help.

“However, many more perpetrators don’t take responsibility for their abusive behaviour or believe they are not doing anything wrong. It is important to understand that abuse is essentially about power and control. We offer assistance to those who are willing to engage in the recovery process.”



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12SA JEWISH REPORT

Letters

22 March – 5 April 2013

Disclaimer

The letters page is intended to provide opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report.

Guidelines for letters

Letters up to 400 words get preference. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime contact phone number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened. *The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za*

JEWISH HEART IS BEING DESTROYED BY ITS OWN PEOPLE

In response to Jack Shapiro’s letter in last week’s Jewish Report, expressing his confusion about the Mizrachi/religious Zionist electorate’s strange alliance with what is the most anti-religious government of Israel, there is something far more alarming.

The new government plans to forbid the majority of young religious boys to learn Torah.

They plan to force them into a completely anti-religious army, force them into secular and immodest universi ties where there is absolutely

no allowance to keep Torah law - and if they don’t comply, they will forfeit any financial benefits granted to all other Israelis.

To what is the poorest sect in Israel today, this will undoubtedly have severe and possibly tragic consequences. The new government has clearly stated its plan to change Shabbat into a normal day with all shops and buses running as usual, to allow the raising and selling of pigs, to shut down the power of any Beth Din, as well as to allow easy conversions to Judaism

which do not comply with halacha.

Although the religious Zionist movement has made it clear that authentic Torah and the importance of Torah learning is not their priority, the bigger issue is that the Jewish people are in grave danger as the heart of what makes us Jewish is being destroyed by our own people. I guess I’ll be singing Vehi SheAmda to a different tune this year.

David Sher

Johannesburg

KEEP AS MANY SHUL DOORS OPEN AS POSSIBLE

It’s very interesting to note the talk that goes around as regards the closing of shuls. When one looks back in time, there were so many shuls that catered to the needs of the Jewish community, especially in the Doornfontein area.

With the passage of time, the Jewish fraternity relocated to other areas and as a result the shuls have closed down. What is still significant is the “Lions” Synagogue in Doornfontein that is still alive and serving the needs of its faithful congregants, who daven there.

Well done, you are indeed a “lion of note in the wilderness”. I frequently attend services at the legendary shul in Brakpan, but with limited attendances, we strive to keep the shul alive.

There have been snide remarks from various quarters, as to why the shul should still be in service with such a small congregation. I refuse to accede to these demands.

Personally, I take my hat off to two great gentlemen, namely Jeff and Ernest Waner, who maintain and keep the shul alive. You are worth the salt of the earth for your selfless efforts.

Let’s keep the fires burning, for we all know too well if we close the doors, we divorce ourselves from Hashem. We pray and believe G-d bless.

Barney Segal

Johannesburg

DON’T GIVE FRONT PAGE
PUBLICITY TO ‘LIARS AND
THUGS’

I am visiting South Africa from Israel. I want to comment on last week’s front page story and photograph in Jewish Report on the disruption of Yossi Reshef’s recital at Wits.

Please don’t give such good front page publicity to liars and thugs who disrupted the Israeli pianist.

Instead, publicise on your front page ORT SA who have donated laptops to Alexandra township teachers and the Sudanese Simon Deng who is a goodwill ambassador and pro-Israel.

Esther Fein

Israel

A SMALL SPARK IS NEEDED TO START A HUGE FIRE

Your editorial of March 15, “Does Israel Apartheid Week matter?” refers. The editorial discusses “Israel Apartheid Week” (IAW) and the movement to boycott Israel (BDS).

The main objective of IAW and BDS movements is to coerce Israel to recognise Palestine as an independent state and failing this, to delegitimise Israel. (There is no guarantee that if Palestine is recognised there will not be a subsequent attempt to delegitimise Israel.)

However, a by-product of the IAW and BDS movements is to generate suspicion, antipathy and even hatred towards Jews/Israelis. Should, subsequently, an isolated incident occur with negative consequences (such as an Israeli motorist fatally injuring a Palestinian pedestrian, particularly in Judea or Samaria) then this might spark attacks on Jews in any anti-Israel or anti-Semitic location.

To substantiate my opinion, I refer to Kristallnacht in Germany in 1938 during which 190 shuls were set on

fire and 30 000 Jews sent to concentration camps. I also quote from Encyclopaedia Judaica: It (Kristallnacht) was officially provoked by the assassination of Ernst von Rath, a Third Secretary of the German embassy in Paris, by Herschel Grynspan, the son of Polish Jewish parents living in Germany, until their deportation to the Polish German border in October 1938.

Critically, this incident was preceded by relentless anti-Semitic indoctrination of the German public.

Footnote. According to Laurence Rees (“The Dark Charisma of Adolf Hitler”, page 190) approximately 12 000 Polish Jews who had been living in Germany were transferred by Germans to the German Polish border and left to fend for themselves. Poland did not accept them back.

John Brenner

Johannesburg

CLARIFYING FACTS ON YOSHI RESHEF RECITAL HAPPENINGS

In the article on pages 1 and 3 which appeared in last week’s issue, about the piano recital which was disrupted at Wits University due to Israel Apartheid Week demonstrations, there were two factual errors. It was in fact not Victor Gordon, of Tararam, who contacted the two vice chancellors to advise them of the disrupted concert in the Atrium at Wits University.

Rather, Professor Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph of Wits School of the Arts emailed both Professor Adam Habib and

Professor Loyiso Nongxa after returning home, late on Tuesday evening.

She received a warm and concerned response from Prof Habib. In the story it was also not clearly stated that Victor Gordon had in fact not been at the concert in question, but had supplied facts about what had happened that evening, based on conversations he had had with various colleagues, friends and acquaintances, who were there. We regret the errors.

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WITH RIGID, PRECONCEIVED IDEAS, THERE’S NO BASIS FOR DISCUSSION

I write in response to the article written by Ariela Carno, president of SAUJS, in last week’s Jewish Report, “Promoting dialogue as opposed to demonisation”.

I am a Jewish student in 3rd year medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The community of Jewish students is a heterogeneous one. Unless Ariela is sure that all Jewish students agree with the ideologies of SAUJS, she should be careful making sweeping statements claiming that SAUJS represents their views.

I do not agree with all their views and I believe that debate, especially around Israel, is discouraged in the Jewish community in general, including in SAUJS (despite their claims to the contrary). This should not invalidate my opinions.

In addition, she is correct when she says that the Israel Awareness Week wall was defaced.

However, she did not mention that the Israel Apartheid Week wall was also vandalised, and thus she cannot claim any moral high ground here.

Finally, she seems to assume that there is no truth in what members of BDS and PSC are saying (and conversely that what pro-Zionists say is always true). If both sides have such rigid preconceived ideas, there is no real basis for discussion or debate.

David Fine
Victory Park, Johannesburg

WHY THE LACK OF INTEREST IN THE HOLOCAUST BY YOUNG JEWS?

I recently read an article by Dr Vusi Shongwe who works in the Office of the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal.

He laments that our past is not being kept alive and suggests that “each and every community should establish its heritage forum where heritage could be discussed and passed on to the young ones. Schools should encourage the recording of oral history.”

Dr Shongwe was referring to recent South African history, but his remarks made me review my efforts to keep the events and the message of the Holocaust before the youth. Since 1985 I have lectured before some 500 audiences.

I am a survivor of concentration camps and a death march. Recently I lectured twice in one week at a local Jewish high school. In my first lecture I related some of my experiences.

I believed that they would engender thought and questions from my 15- to 16-year-old Jewish audience which I could then deal with during my second visit. They had only one question for me.

Now the majority of the Jews in South Africa stem from Eastern Europe. It is true that these Jews arrived here in the late 1800s and early 20th century, not long after the Anglo-Boer War.

The majority of their families remained in “Der Heim” where they were to perish. It also means that there can be very few youngsters in today’s Jewish schools who did not lose a great-grandparent or other distant relation during the Nazi massacres.

The Shoah is arguably the greatest tragedy that befell Jewry during the thousands of years of its existence. It took place during our lifetime, within living memory. How are our schools dealing with this essential information if their pre-adult students can only come up with one single question after hearing a lecture from a survivor?

Teaching the Shoah is not only a matter of what, how, where and when. Surely a Jewish child of some intelligence also wants to know the why and the wherefore? His forebears could not avoid it. Can he?

Ironically, I have standing invitations from German and church schools to speak there every year, not from Jewish schools.

Don Krausz
Chairman, Association of Holocaust Survivors in Johannesburg

CLOSING DOWN YESHIVOT FOR A HANDFUL OF SHEKELS

Is no-one concerned with what is happening in Israel? The new government in Israel is planning to close down hundreds of yeshivot in an attempt to only slightly reduce the taxes of Israelis.

Forget about world anti-Semitism - has there ever been a period in history where Jews forbid other Jews from being committed to Torah?

What is most astonishing about this, is that the entire amount of government funding for religious institutions in Israel, comes to about 172 million shekels, less than one per cent of the entire annual GDP of the country.

What is even more crazy, is that as it currently stands, Israeli Arabs in East Jerusalem and another one million Arabs in Gaza, get free electricity - but the Israeli government would rather tear down the yeshivot!

I used to be a big financial supporter of Israeli government-sponsored institutions, but I’m afraid that now, when they are harsher on their own brethren than their foes, I will no longer be contributing.

I, even as a simple secular Jew, would rather directly support Israeli yeshivot and kollels, and hope that the Israeli government realises that forbidding Jewish people to learn the Torah in return for a mere few shekels, is life threatening.

Joanne Lewis Sandown

SHAPIRO MISCONSTRUES THE AIMS OF THE MIZRACHI MOVEMENT

In the South African Jewish Report of last week, a letter by Jack Shapiro was published attacking the Mizrachi organisation and Naftali Bennett’s Bayit Yehudi party for trying to stop people from learning Torah.

It doesn’t cease to amaze me that expecting people who are not the elite of Torah learners (the Rambam’s “Sheivet Levi”) do their bit and serve in the army together with their Limmud Torah is falsely construed as trying to stop them from learning Torah.

Neither Bennett nor Yair Lapid (of the Yesh Atid party) are suggesting people should be stopped learning Torah- they are only suggesting that the majority of religious Jews, with the exception of the most dedicated Torah learners be required to take time off from fulltime Torah study to fight for Israel’s survival, together with everyone else.

This has always been the position of the Mizrachi movement and is in fact the Torah position, if you bother to read the Chumash, Talmud, and Rambam.

Those who follow the news will see that Lapid’s party is in fact the first secular Israeli party to have a rosh yeshiva as its second in command and to openly be pushing for Torah study among the secular population, something Bennett is playing a large part in encouraging. These are facts that propagandists of Shas have not included in their tantrums of the past weeks.

One would expect such propaganda from Kikar haShabbat or Yateid Neeman, but why would a so-called Zionist newspaper even publish such junk - surely letters get short-listed and the ones with no logical argument at all or which contain pure defamation, don’t make it?

I am not exactly a classical Mizrachnik and feel very at home in the great Lithuanian yeshivot, but garbage is garbage, and this letter was nothing but defamation against the Mizrachi movement and haBayit haYehudi party, to whom a huge apology is owed.

Rabbi Yoni Isaacson
Johannesburg

The Jewish Report, through its letters page, has since its founding, been striving to be a forum for diverse opinion. Differ with Jack Shapiro by all means, but what you are actually proposing is censorship of a view you disagree with. That we can never accede to. - Editor

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Knesset members help Women of the Wall to

**BEN SALES
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If ever there were a gathering of Women of the Wall that was going to spark a wider conflict, last week Tuesday’s would have been the one.

For the past several months, police have detained members of the women’s prayer group during their monthly Rosh Chodesh services for wearing tallit prayer shawls at the site, in contravention of Kotel rules.

At last month’s service marking the beginning of the Hebrew month of Adar, Jerusalem police arrested 10 women, including the sister and niece of American comedian Sarah Silverman, for disturbing public order.

For this month’s service last Tuesday, three members of Knesset would be coming. American Jews were planning solidarity rallies, and haredi Orthodox Jews were planning to put up a fight.

“Save us!” read posters hung in Israeli haredi neighbourhoods, exhorting men and women to show up at the Wall at 07:00 last Tuesday to oppose Women of the Wall’s service.

“The Western Wall will be trampled and desecrated by a group of women called ‘Women of the Wall’, who wish to desecrate the Wall on Tuesday. Anyone who attributes importance to the place that G-d’s spirit will never leave, will come to protest and cry out!”

Women of the Wall Chairman Anat Hoffman, lodged a formal complaint with police last Sunday alleging “incitement of violence against Women of the Wall” over



Women of the Wall holding their monthly Rosh Chodesh service at the Western Wall on March 12, in contravention of rules barring women from wearing prayer shawls or reading from the Torah at the site.

the unsigned posters, known in Yiddish as pashkevillim.

This time, however, the women were allowed to pray largely undisturbed and without harassment by the police.

When 07:00 rolled around, only a few

dozen haredim were there to protest the women, and the police were prepared. A few officers kept the haredi group away from the mechitzah barrier that separates men and women, and a few more police officers stood with Women of the Wall, who num-

bered more than 100.

Most of them - including Knesset members Stav Shaffir of the Labour Party, and Michal Rozin and Tamar Zandberg of Meretz - wore prayer shawls. But no one was detained or arrested, despite the 2003 Israeli Supreme Court ruling upholding a ban on women wearing tefillin or tallit prayer shawls at the site, or reading from a Torah scroll.

The Knesset members used their immunity to enter the area with their prayer shawls, while other women had men bring the shawls in for them.

The biggest disturbances the women had to deal with were a few rounds of haredim chanting and singing “They will devise a plan and it will be foiled” - taken from a prayer cursing enemies of the Jews. Later in the service, a woman stood in front of the group and yelled “For shame!” several times.

Other than that, the Women of the Wall prayed their service complete with self-assured singing.

“For 24 years, the Women of the Wall have been praying at a site sacred to the Jewish people and for years they have been stopped just because they seek to pray in their own way,” Shaffir wrote on her Facebook page.

“This morning, following hate banners in the haredi press, I joined them. At first we were prevented from entering the square on the grounds we were disturbing the order, but there is nothing that 100 women armed with a shawl can’t do.”

The rabbi of the Western Wall, Shmuel Rabinowitz, condemned last Tuesday’s

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get to pray

prayer service. In a press statement he said the women brought “brothers against brothers in unnecessary confrontation” and noted that the wall next to Robinson’s Arch had been designated as the area for women’s prayer services.

“The Western Wall is the only place shared by all the people of Israel - and it is not the place to decide or express a world view,” Rabinowitz said.

“I urge anyone for whom the Wall is dear, to do whatever he can to keep disputes outside the plaza, and leave the people of Israel one place where there are no demonstrations, clashes and hatred.”

A spokesman for Women of the Wall, Shira Pruce, told JTA she did not expect the group’s success to establish a precedent at the Western Wall. She surmised that the police didn’t want to arrest the Knesset members or cause a stir just before President Barack Obama’s visit to Jerusalem next week.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld confirmed to JTA that no arrests were made because of the presence of the Knesset members, whom he noted had certain immunity from arrest or bodily searches.

“We’ll deal with upcoming events with sensitivity,” Rosenfeld pledged.

Meanwhile, supporters in Washington held their own rally in support of Women of the Wall, supporters in New York and Cleveland held special solidarity services, and San Francisco supporters were planning a rally for this Sunday.

At a demonstration late on Monday in front of the Israeli Embassy in Washington, some 125 participants, including children, prayed and sang with guitars and tambourines. The women raised their arms to hold aloft prayer shawls in a show of solidarity with their Israeli counterparts.

“The words ‘A woman was arrested for wearing a tallit’ should not be coming out of Israel,” said Rabbi Esther Lederman of Temple Micah in Washington, who took her one-year-old son to the protest.

A letter from Anat Hoffman, chairman of Woman of the Wall, was read aloud to the Washington crowd.

“I want to hug each of you. I want to shake everyone’s hand,” Hoffman said in the letter read by Judy Gelmen, chairman of Ameinu, one of the organisers of the Washington event. “We are one in conviction that there is more than one way to be a Jew in Israel and at the Wall.”

Embassy spokesman Aaron Sagui, who went out to greet the protesters, promised to convey the group’s message to Jerusalem. (JTA)

Lack of mutual trust is but one impediment to a Mideast solution

SHIRA DRUION

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is a really a double-edged sword; there is no win-win option on the playing field. There are just no simple solutions.

So says woman-in-the-know, Miri Eisen (pictured), a widely respected pundit on Israeli affairs and IDF spokesman, as well as foreign media adviser to former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

She was brought out to South Africa on a three-week tour, as guest of the SA Zionist Federation. She has been to Durban, is presently in Johannesburg and will be in Cape Town for Pesach. She is lecturing extensively to numerous groups on various political topics, inspiring large audiences with her wealth of knowledge and innovative take on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

“If we were guaranteed that there would be peace, I think we could reach an amicable solution in a reasonable amount of time. But unfortunately, the road travelled has not been a simple one and there are grave concerns that need to be considered with very careful judgement.

“The fact that the parties involved do not fully trust one another, is certainly one of the weightiest factors contributing to the delay in reaching a viable peace agreement in The Middle East, and there doesn’t seem to be any easy

resolution that has been suggested to help solve this gnawing problem.

“The issues facing Israel in the Gaza and West Bank conflict are multi-layered and complex. The fact that military law applies to these areas, continues to be an anomaly; despite the fact that they (the territories) were acquired through military action, the fact that we do not apply Israeli law, like in the case of the Golan Heights, remains an issue of great contention, not only for the people living in these areas, but for those who debate and have an opinion on the matter.

“But the sovereignty versus security debate really begs the question: which is the lesser of the two evils? I think the choice really boils down to either: turning into the pariah nation if you don’t compromise, and if you do negotiate, you are most certainly putting the security of your country and your people at stake.”

When asked to comment on the victimised persona that the Palestinians have created, Eisen says: “Playing the victim might win you sympathy, but the converse is that it is particularly damaging, because you are perceived as being irresponsible and unaccountable, and when a country is attempting to gain worldwide approval for being able to self-govern and achieve statehood, these factors are very negatively impacting on the equation.

“I think South Africa is at the



forefront of something very similar to Europe and South America in terms of the growing anti-Israel sentiment that is festering prevalently and at such a rapid speed.

“It is an issue of great concern and my advice to those in positions of power is to create dialogue with a diversity of ethnic and religious groups at grassroots level. The solution will not be reached by standing alone in isolation; because this option is not sustainable for the growth and protection of a Jewish community.”

Eisen today works as a lecturer, commentator and guide on Israeli and regional geopolitics, addressing groups in Israel and around the world. She also continues to work with the media as a commentator and teaches at the IDC College in Herzliya.



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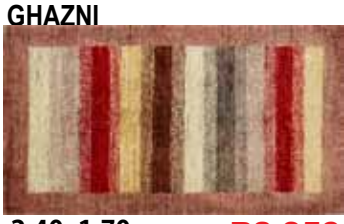


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Israelis. The annual Samaritan Passover sacrifice that takes place on Mt Gerizim overlooking Nablus in Samaria, has turned into a major spectacle, attracting thousands of onlookers to the scenic hilltop.

This year, the Samaritans, who number just 756 souls divided between the Kiryat Luza village on Mount Gerizim and Holon, will mark Passover on April 23. Prof. Corinaldi says the calendar discrepancy is because Jews start calculating from the first year of creation, whereas the Samaritan calendar starts from the first year Joshua Bin-Nun entered Israel.

As a result, the leap years are not parallel and Samaritan festivals sometimes take place a month later. While both Karaites and Samaritans are full-fledged Israeli citizens according to Israel's Law of Return, Samaritans are not considered Jews by Israeli rabbinic authorities.

Samaritans, who claim to be original ancient Israelites with genealogy going back to the tribes of Ephraim and Menashe, hold that Mount Gerizim, not Jerusalem, is the spiritual centre of Israel.

Like the Karaites, Samaritans accept only the Five Books of Moses and the book of Joshua - for this tiny remnant, the history of Israel after Joshua is that of a renegade sectarian community.

According to British Rabbi Jeffrey M Cohen, an authority on Passover customs around the world, "only they (the Samaritans) remain the faithful 'Israel'."

Jews abandoned the ritual of the Paschal lamb sacrifice when the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 CE. The shank bone on the seder plate is the closest most Israelis will get to a sacrifice.

Samaritans, who never identified with Jerusalem and who believe Mount Gerizim to have been where the binding of Isaac took place, never gave up the sacrificial practice.

This year the Samaritans will perform the Passover sacrifice as they have done on Mount Gerizim for thousands of years. Following the biblical commandment in Exodus 12:5, each male head of household selects an unblemished lamb and the entire com-

munity gathers with the High Priest Aharon ben Ab-Chisda ben Yaacob at twilight on the 14th of Nisan to observe the sacrifice in a festive manner.

Samaritan community leader Benjamin Tsedaka, the director of the Institute of Samaritan Studies in Holon, gives a succinct description the ancient annual ritual. "The High Priest opens with the sacrifice prayer and announces the ritual slaughter."

"The sheep are brought to the altar and are slaughtered by experienced slaughterers. Members of each family check the kashrut of the slaughter for each other. Matzah with bitter herbs are distributed to all members of the community.

"The sheep are then cleaned both inside and out and they are bound, each sheep on a spit and koshered by being sprinkled with salt. About two and a half hours before midnight, the sheep on their spits are put into ovens, which have been well heated.

"The opening of the oven is completely sealed with an iron net to stabilise the skewers and with burlap, which is immediately covered with a damp mixture of earth and bushes. The fire is stifling and the immense heat that wafts from the deep ovens roasts the sheep.

"In the middle of the night, at the time when the Angel of Destruction went out to slay the Egyptian firstborn, the sheep are removed from the ovens, taken off the skewers, transferred onto large platters, and accompanied by singing, which has not ceased since the start of the sacrifice, and the platters are brought home.

"There, the meat of the sacrifice will be eaten in haste with matzah and bitter herbs. Any remains left over are brought to be burned before dawn."

"Karaites and Samaritan Passover customs are differences not in principle, but in practice," asserts Prof Corinaldi. In his view, they illustrate freedom of religion in Israel.

"The Orthodox would like to have unity and uniformity of practice, but that will only happen when the Mashiach appears," he concludes. (JNS.org)



The Samaritans' Passover celebration at Mount Gerizim in 2011. Photo: FLAVIO GRYNSPAN



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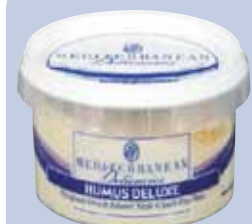
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Why G-d didn’t delegate

ELISHA GREENBAUM

I remember the seder nights of my childhood. Trestle tables and fold-up chairs snaking their way around corners, matzah crumbs decorating the carpets, fantastic smells wafting their way out of the kitchen and a crowd of us kids spilling grape juice in excitement at all that was happening around.

As the family grew, they changed the venue and menu, sub-groups hived off to their in-laws on alternate nights and every year there were always some cousins interstate or overseas.

However, with all the changes there was always one constant; at the head of the table, the focus of all our attention and resplendent in his long white kitel, sat my grandfather, “Zeida”.

In my mind I still hear his melodic voice chanting the tunes Zeida used to lead the seder every year and all the family would sing along to the familiar tunes.

He’d pause in the same places of the liturgy and insert insightful commentary to the text and repeat cherished sayings of his father. Even now, years after he passed away and after nearly 15 years of sitting at other seders, in my mind I still hear his melodic voice chanting the tunes of my childhood.

There was one particular cadence that I always enjoyed for its soulfulness and simplicity of tune. The Haggadah quotes a line from the Book of Exodus and expands upon it:

“I will pass through the land of Egypt and I will smite every firstborn, and upon all the gods of Egypt I will perform acts of judgment, I, G-d.”

The sages queried the frequency of G-d referring to Himself with the personal pronoun and explained that G-d was promising to do it all Himself:

I’ll rescue them and not send an angel. I, and not a seraph. I, and not a messenger. I’ll do

it all Myself.

My Zeida would sing the refrain in his own inimitable way, emphasising the point and counterpoint of the text. The whole family would join in the harmony and that paragraph has always been one of my seder highlights.

I recently discovered an insight of the Rebbe on these words. The Rebbe wondered why G-d was so insistent on doing everything Himself, why not leave something for the angels to do? There is no shame in delegating, so why go to such pains to point out that G-d acted alone?

In a comment that could well sum up my Zeida’s philosophy of life and describe his constant care and concern for others, the Rebbe explained that G-d is teaching us how to respond to people in need.

Occasionally we meet people who need our help and it is our responsibility to reach out to them in response. It might be uncomfortable or taxing, yet we must be ready to sacrifice personal comfort in our effort to save a fellow Jew. Going “down to Egypt”; descending from our position of comfort and ease into an ugly morass of pitfalls and personal danger, nothing is too great a sacrifice.

He did it all Himself without waiting for angels or agents to play their part, would be so easy to relax and leave the heavy lifting for others. Sure, I’d play my part, offer my effort to the joint taskforce, but surely saving the world should be a joint endeavour and I am content with a bit part of the glory. No-one would fault me if I waited for others to join in before I stepped forward.

But that’s not the lesson we learn from G-d. He did it all Himself without waiting for angels or agents to play their part. When you see someone waiting for salvation, don’t hang back as part of the crowd, but commit yourself totally to the relief efforts.

People in trouble don’t have the time or

luxury to wait while you quibble over the command structure; they’re waiting for you to rescue them from evil.

If we see a problem it’s our job to fix it. If we are made aware of evil, we must go out to fight. Their cause is our cause; their needs are our responsibility. We dare not wait for others to shoulder the burden but gracefully and gratefully accept our mission to save a world and build a future.

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World News in Brief

Netanyahu: Security is top priority in new government

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking on Monday at a ceremony introducing his new government, said that Israel’s security was his top priority in the new term.

“As prime minister, I don’t have the privilege to abandon the external challenges to Israel. We must ensure the existence of the State of Israel. Therefore, the first priority will be the defence of the country and its citizens,” Netanyahu said, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Netanyahu labelled the growing threat of Iran and its nuclear programme as well as the deteriorating situation in Syria as Israel’s biggest security threats.

Netanyahu also discussed peace with the Palestinians. He stated that his government would be ready to make a “historic compromise” with the Palestinians.

“We extend our hand in peace to the Palestinians,” Netanyahu said, according to the Associated Press. “Israel has proven time and again it is ready for concessions in exchange for real peace, and the situation today is no different.”

As Netanyahu begins his third term as Israeli prime minister, only Israel’s founding father, David Ben-Gurion, has served longer as prime minister. (JNS.org)

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Uganda’s chief rabbi’s message: ‘Jews don’t have horns’



ROBYN SASSEN

“We Jews are still often condemned as Jesus killers,” said Rabbi Gershom Sizomu, (pictured) Uganda’s chief rabbi, visiting South Africa last week. “To combat this, I ran for political office in 2011. I gained majority support, but because I stood against government, results were skewed. I will do it again: I must convince Uganda that Jews don’t have horns!”

Rabbi Sizomu, 43, visiting Johannesburg’s Masorti community, is a third generation Jew. He’s also the only black rabbi in sub-Saharan Africa. Born out of dissent for 19th century Christian colonialism, and bearing no relation to ancestral Diaspora Judaism, Ugandan Jews, known as Abayudaya, practise a Judaism that grew out of Old Testament precepts and was fuelled by visiting traders who happened to be Jewish.

Rabbi Sizomu’s grandparents were contemporaries of Semei Kakungulu, who initiated the shift to Judaism. His father was arrested for building a succah when Uganda was under Idi Amin’s dictatorship.

“Our minyan was in my father’s bedroom,” he told the Jewish Journal in 2008. “Amin was ousted erev Pesach 1979. The government declared freedom of worship; the first time I went to synagogue was the second night of Pesach.”

He told the Jewish Report the biggest challenge today’s Abayudaya face is inadequate access to ritual objects. “We make our own kiddish cups. We shecht our own meat; but on Succot, we have to improvise with prayer: the Arba Minim are impossible to obtain in Mbale, Eastern Uganda, where the Abayudaya live.

“The community comprises subsistence farmers. Since Amin’s ousting, we’ve grown

from 300 to 1 500.” The Muslim community in Uganda grows more quickly, but, aiming to retain friendly relations with Muslim compatriots, Abayudaya are holding their own.

Rabbi Sizomu spent a year in Israel, part of his rabbinical training, completed in Los Angeles in 2008 under Conservative Masorti auspices.

“Whew! Israel is a good place to be Jewish. I felt liberated around Hebrew-speakers. On Yom Kippur, the country comes to a standstill.” He’s worked hard to seek Israeli approval of the status of the Abayudaya.

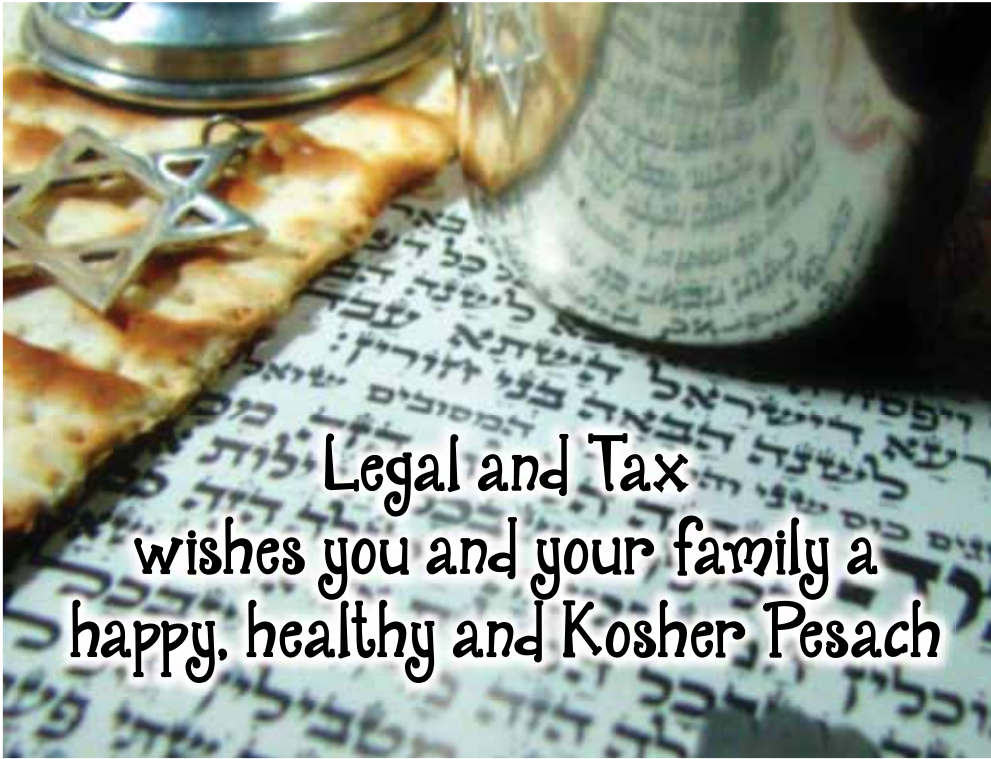
The Conservative role of women in shul “is new for my community. But I don’t force it; I feel it is good for them.”

The Abayudaya practised polygamy in the past, but don’t any longer. Similarly, early Abayudaya were averse to medical technology, claiming it wasn’t G-d’s will. “This perspective changed in the 1960s, when visitors started coming here from abroad.”







Mbale is a malaria area; people often need dialysis. “Now we face financial, not ideological challenges: A subsistence farmer does not have money to travel to a big city to get medical help.” The nearest city is Kampala, four hours away.

“Two organisations support the Abayudaya, Be’chol Lashon, a non-profit organisation that helps with fundraising and to champion our causes and Kulanu, (www.bechollashon.org) which enables donations to be filtered to the community, from the general international public.”

He’s also garnered local government support for the Abayudaya. “At first they were unfriendly; when we built our schools, we invited them to play a role. It’s tikkun olam.”




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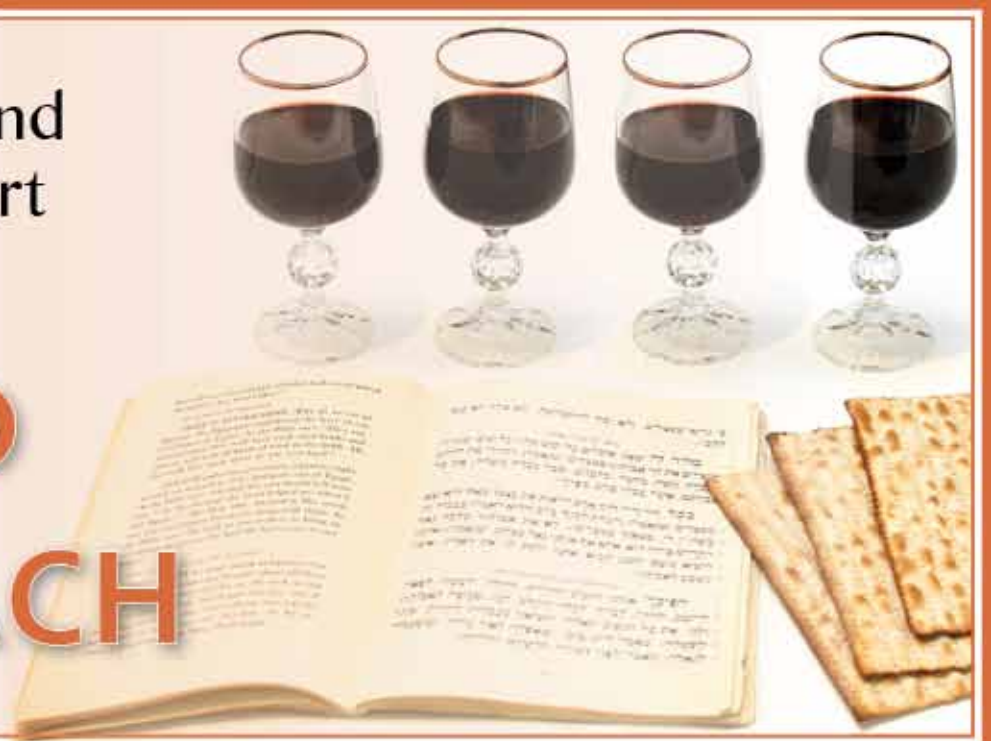


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“The Interview”. Dual-channel installation, shot at Wheatbaker Hotel, Lagos, Nigeria, June 2012.

Enough, enough of all these children!

Art: ‘The Woods’ by Candice Breitz, Goodman Gallery (011) 788-1113
Until: March 30

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

Cliché warns against the predominance of children and dogs in Hollywood, because the glut of cuteness they offer can blur any plot’s gist. In this exhibition, Berlin-based, Johannesburg-born Candice Breitz plays that cliché with seamlessness so slick it is dizzying. Not unlike “Extra”, Breitz’s exhibitions at Johannesburg’s Standard Bank Gallery and Iziko, Cape Town last year, this exhibition uses expensive technology, as it draws from and points at film culture. “Extra” was about twins; it pulled its subject matter from the man on the street. This one uses real performers. And here we find a constellation of child

stars from Hollywood, Bollywood and Nollywood (the film industry in Nigeria burgeoning since 1992). Each child is embraced in curated and constructed interviews, manipulated to feed your opinion of them as a prism of the industry, acknowledging how they too, have been manipulated by society to not be what they seem. With a couple of photographic images thrown into the mix on the gallery’s one side, the products of shoots conducted at the SABC in Auckland Park when last Breitz was in South Africa, this exhibition is essentially a triptych, with its three works, “The Interview” (with Lagos performers), “The Rehearsal” (with Bollywood stars) and “The Audition” (with Hollywood kids). The three video constructions co-commissioned by museums in Melbourne and Salem, Massachusetts, are shown in an immensely professional space, including

black-out curtains, floor to ceiling projections and impeccably functional technology. The children are revoltingly unchild-like as they precociously espouse on the film industry’s values, an aspect only cynically and marginally containable in “The Interview”, shot in Lagos, as it features Chinedu Ikedieze and Osita Iheme, two adult performers suffering from dwarfism, and speaking as though they were children. But in each series of interviews, you watch the thin embracing line of cute slip over into irritating and then into excruciating, very quickly. This project skitters bruisingly from being art in a gallery sense and toward academic posturing. They’re beautiful children, so confident in their understanding of the world around them that they are unbearable. In her media release, Breitz, a darling of international contemporary art circles, offers the

observation that she is exploring “the real to reel” relationship, but in truth, all of these children play into different reals and reels as they look at a diversity of postured cameras. And then, there’s the kicker: “Each member of the cast,” Breitz adds in the release, “was in fact asked to memorise and deliver a range of quotations drawn from interviews with Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan.” Having looked at the work and swallowed that little caveat, you leave the show vaguely feeling cheated - the exhibition’s premises becomes difficult to revisit rationally. You have seen this kind of child in countless block buster films, thankfully in cameo roles. Why on earth should you deem it worthy to look at them in detail for the duration of a gallery visit?

‘Race’ will challenge people to examine own attitudes

ROBYN SASSEN

Black, white, Jew. Racial terms have for centuries been twisted hither and yon, to win support, sympathy and arguments. US Pulitzer-winning playwright David Mamet has taken on the slippery beast of racial discrimination in an astonishing play filled with hairpin bends, with the demons of wealth and sex thrown into the mix that will rivet you to your seat and justify a drive to Pretoria. This is “Race”, which debuted under Mamet’s direction in 2009, and opens at Pretoria’s State Theatre in two weeks’ time, under the production auspices of The Playhouse in Durban. Michael Richard, who plays Jack Lawson, a partner in a law firm, spoke to Jewish Report just before leaving for Durban last week to start rehearsals. Meet Charles Stricken (Graham Hopkins), a wealthy married white man accused of raping a young black woman. In his quest for a fair hearing, he finds himself at the offices of Lawson and Henry Brown (Hlomla Dandala), black and white attorneys in partnership. The plot thickens as the underbelly informing what motivates a lawyer to take on a case is slit wide, revealing moral standpoints which will keep your discursive muscles at-witch through the play’s 90 minutes and beyond. Having performed in Durban and Grahamstown last year, the play boasts a cast of some of the best performers in the country, including US-trained, KwaZulu-Natal-based Nomdumiso Tembe, who plays Susan, the clerk, in a pivotal role. “It’s a wonderful play,” says Richard. “It deals with a situation so real in South Africa, everywhere else, too, really, in terms of the rash of problems we obsess over, have fear of and are complicit in: Race.” It also raises some rather delicious barbs against the legal fraternity and its morals. “Does a lawyer really care if the person he represents is guilty? Jack will take the case if he thinks he can win; it’s a game for him. The best entertainer will win.” Mamet, in an essay on his work, wrote: “Race, like sex,

is a subject on which it is near impossible to tell the truth.” “In Grahamstown last year, it was well received,” adds Richard, “Clare Mortimer is a hugely intelligent director. She knows Mamet well. His writing is so precise, in its structure and rhythm. “The language is glorious. The arguments are clever. And the intrigue... you must see to believe. Mamet’s attitude toward performers of his work is contentious. He says they must just learn the lines and allow the play to speak for itself.” He laughs. “As a cast, we’ve had all the arguments it raises. I’ve delved too deeply into Jack’s character to voice judgement on his morals. Suffice it to say I enjoy playing him.” Says Mortimer: “Race is an important piece of theatre. We hope it will create honest discussion around the subject and challenge people to examine their own attitudes.”

• *Race is at the Arena, State Theatre, Pretoria, April 4 - 28 (012) 392-4000 or contact The Playhouse (031) 369-9456 for further information.*



Graeme Hopkins and Michael Richard in a scene from “Race”.

Meet our ‘cover girl’ Gail Josselsohn

ROBYN SASSEN

This issue’s “cover girl”, Gail Josselsohn, has for 45 years surrounded herself with colour. She made the silk matzah cover on this issue’s cover. After studying industrial design and fine art at the Johannesburg College of Art in 1968, she began designing textiles. She was noticed by ICI Dyes, and invited to show work in London; soon after, she became textile designer of choice of the major couturiers of the time, including Peter Soldatos, Hennie Tromp and Ian Weinberg. During a holiday in Greece in the early 1980s her career as silk artist unfolded. Her sons - small boys at the time - both had mumps; she was confined to the hotel. “I looked out the window and thought I’d gone to heaven,” she said. Her room overlooked the working space of Greek women dying silk fabric. She learned the technique and produced a body of work that Mark Read, of the Everard Read Gallery in Johannesburg, snapped up with alacrity. “It was the first time he’s seen work of this nature.” Over the years, Josselsohn has widened her repertoire to include teaching silk-painting, and making challah covers, parochets (the curtain in front of the aron kodesh), tablecloths and scarves.



Gail Josselsohn in front of one of her silk paintings, and wearing one of her own silk scarves.

SA theatre awards: And the winners are...

ROBYN SASSEN

This past Sunday and Monday respectively saw the country’s annual theatre awards, celebrating achievement on stage and behind the theatre scenes in Cape Town and Johannesburg. The 48th annual Fleur du Cap Theatre Awards took place at the Artscape Theatre, in an event directed by Lara Bye. The Naledi Awards took place at the Lyric Theatre in Ormonde.

Fleur du Cap bests:

- Director:** Yael Farber - Mies Julie
- New SA Script:** Champ by Louis Viljoen
- Lead Actress in a Play:** Quanita Adams - Boesman and Lena
- Lead Actor in a Play:** Elton Landrew - Boesman and Lena
- Supporting Actress in a Play:** Thoko Ntshinga - Mies Julie
- Supporting Actor in a Play:** Mbulelo Grootboom - Just Business
- Lead Actress in a Musical:** Samantha Peo - Cabaret
- Lead Actor in a Musical:** Dean Balie - Kat and the Kings
- Supporting Actress in a Musical:** Charon Williams-Ros - Cabaret
- Supporting Actor in a Musical:** Peter Court - Cabaret
- Actor in a One-Person Show:** James Cunningham - Sunday Morning
- Rosalie van der Gucht Prize for Best New Director:** Kim Kerfoot - Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act
- Sound Design:** Daniel Pencer and Matthew Pencer - Mies Julie
- Costume Design:** Angela Nemov - The Comedy of Errors
- Set Design:** Fred Abrahamse - Kingdom of Earth
- Lighting Design:** Paul Abrams - Mies Julie
- Most Promising Student:** Roelof Storm (UCT)
- Lifetime Achievement Award:** Richard Kearns
- Innovation in Theatre:** Mandla Mbothwe
- People’s Choice Award:** I Am Hamlet

Naledi bests:

- Director of a Play:** Sylvaine Strike - The Miser
- Musical Director:** Louis Zurnamer - Phantom of the Opera
- Production of a play:** The Miser - produced by the Fortune Cookie Theatre Company
- Production of a Musical:** Phantom of the Opera - produced by Pieter Toerien
- Ensemble Production:** Delirium – by Ariel Dorfman, directed by Greg Homann
- New SA Script:** Abnormal Loads by Neil Copen
- Lead Actress in a Play:** Khutjo Green - The Line
- Lead Actor in a Play:** Michael Richard - Red
- Supporting Actress in a Play:** Patricia Boyer - The Miser

- Supporting Actor in a Play:** Jeremy Richard - Red
- Lead Actress in a Musical:** Samantha Peo - Cabaret
- Lead Actor in a Musical:** Jonathan Roxmouth - Phantom of the Opera
- Children’s Theatre Production:** Goggas! - National Children Theatre
- Newcomer / Breakthrough (Male/Female):** Atandwa Kani - Rhetorical
- Community Theatre:** Sello Le Dipogiso - Black Child Productions directed by Thembeni Joni
- Executive Director’s Award:** Yvette Hardy, MD of Assitej SA
- Sound Design / Sound Effects:** Braam du Toit - Trilogy: Lot/Betésda/Babbel
- Costume Design:** Sarah Roberts - The Miser
- Set Design:** Denis Hutchinson - Delirium
- Lighting Design:** Tina Le Roux - Abnormal Loads
- Original Choreography:** Loukmaan Adams & Jodi Abrahams – Kat and the Kings
- Life time achievement:** Sibongile Khumalo



Francois Theron and Moira Katz of the National Children’s Theatre in Parktown, receiving a Naledi Award for Goggas!, a play by Gill Katz, the best children’s production of the year.



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All who are hungry, come and eat

ARON MOSS

Question:

I am always puzzled by the beginning of the Haggadah, where we declare: “All who are hungry, come and eat; all who are needy come and celebrate Passover.”

Being that this is said while sitting at the dinner table, the only people hearing it are those who are already there. What is the point of making grand invitations when the truly needy can’t hear it?

Answer:

That invitation is not intended for outsiders. We are inviting ourselves and the people around us to really be present at the seder. While we may be sitting at the table, our minds can be miles away. But we may miss out on the most powerful spiritual journey - the seder.

Each one of us is hungry, and we are all needy. We have a soul that hungers for nourishment and inspiration, and we all feel a profound need for our inner self to be freely expressed.

Our soul yearns to love, to give, to contribute to the world and to connect to G-d. But our soul is sometimes trapped, surrounded by obstacles to its being free - scars from the past that cripple us; fears that prevent us from opening our hearts; bad habits that waste our time and divert our energy; toxic relationships that we have become dependant on;



negative attitudes that darken our vision; egotism and complacency that stunt our growth.

We are stuck in our own inner Egypt, with these internal slave-masters holding us back from becoming who we are supposed to be. Like Pharaoh of old, our ego doesn’t want to let us go. Even as we sit down to the seder to read the story of the Israelite Exodus from slavery, we are still slaves.

So at the beginning of the seder we invite ourselves to really come to the seder and experience freedom. Don’t let yourself be enslaved to your Egypt any longer.

“Whoever is hungry, come and eat. Whoever is needy, come and celebrate Passover.”


If you hunger for inspiration, come and absorb the Haggadah’s message of liberty. Don’t just sit there - enter into the Passover experience with

your entire being. Read the story of the Exodus, taste the matzah, the food of faith, and drink in the wine of freedom.

The seder night is more than just a commemoration of miracles of the past; it is a personal experience, the exodus of the soul. The same spiritual energies that brought about the miracles long ago are reawakened. Freedom is in the air. On Passover long ago we left Egypt; this Passover we can free ourselves from our own slavery.

We can rush through the Haggadah to get to the main course. Then our souls remain trapped. Rather let’s take our time, allowing the eternal story of freedom sink in and become a part of us. Let yourself go - free your soul.

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World News in Brief

Poll: Most Americans back Israel, sceptical on peace process

WASHINGTON - Americans by a wide margin support Israel, but do not want the United States to take the lead in an Israeli-Palestinian peace process, a new poll shows.

Fifty-five per cent of Americans, according to the ABC News/Washington Post poll released on Monday, sympathised more with Israel than with the Palestinian Authority. Nine per cent sympathised more with the PA, 14 per cent sympathised with neither side and 18 per cent had no opinion on the question.

Sixty-nine per cent of respondents, though, said the United States should leave peace talks to the Israelis and Palestinians, while 26 per cent said the US should lead the negotiations. The 69 per cent figure is 15 points higher than when the poll last asked about the US role in peace talks 11 years ago, during the second intifada.

Americans were mostly split on US pressure on Israel: 17 per cent said the US put too much pressure on Israel, 21 per cent said there was too little and 41 per cent said it was the proper amount. The poll also showed that 34 per cent of Americans think the US puts too little pressure on the PA, while eight per cent said the US pressured the PA too much.

Seventy-three per cent of Republicans supported Israel over the PA; the number dropped to 49 per cent among Democrats. Only 11 per cent of Democrats and four per cent of Republicans sympathised more with the PA than with Israel.

Conducted by Langer Associates, the poll sampled 1 001 respondents and had a margin of error of 3,5 per cent. (JTA)

Abbas: ‘I don’t see much difference’ between policies of Hamas and PA

RAMALLAH - Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is urging the European Union to remove Hamas from its list of terrorist organisations, using as his justification the similarity of Hamas policy to PA policy.

“If Hamas is committed to the ceasefire and if it openly pledges to stick to the peaceful popular resistance, I don’t see much difference between their policy and ours,” Abbas said in an interview with the Russian network RT that was cited by Israel Hayom.

“In this case, there is no need to label them as a terrorist organisation.”

When the interviewer pointed out that unlike Hamas, Fatah was not firing rockets at Israel, Abbas said, “neither we nor Hamas did. Not any longer.

“After the Second Intifada, we decided to give up on armed resistance,” he said. “And let me be totally frank with you: We don’t want to launch any armed resistance whatsoever. Hamas has said the same. Yes, there were clashes in the past, but they have stopped - and I’m grateful to Allah for that.” (JNS.org)

Read the South African Jewish Report online

www.sajewishreport.co.za

The House (and headphones) that Bob built

High-end headphones make up one of the big growth areas in personal technology, but few are as distinctive as the gear that honours Bob Marley’s memory.

If you’ve walked into a music store lately, you’ll know that the big shift is well under way: music retreating into the back of the store; electronics and accessories taking over the front.

It means that, while record companies are collapsing about our ears, business has never been better for companies that help make our music sound better. The world has never seen as many high-end headphones, nor as many celebrity-endorsed headphones, as in 2013.

The International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas earlier this year, hosted almost as many headphone makers as iPhone accessory manufacturers. And there are a few of those. It also meant that CES was awash with sports and music celebrities posing with “custom-made” headphones. Football star Tim Tebow stepped forward to unveil his “limited edition” SL300 for Soul Electronics, which also launched the Run-Free headphones inspired by Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt. “Limited edition”, of course.

And then they also had designs personalised by soccer star Cesc Fabregas and hip-hop artist Ludacris.

Fellow rapper 50 Cents made his customary appearance at CES to launch the SMS by 50 headphones with SMS Audio. iHip teamed up with MTV’s Snooki for headphones that are also fashion accessories.

The most authentic personalisation, however, came from a name from the past: Bob Marley. The reggae legend’s legacy has been carefully managed by his family, with his widow Rita Marley launching the One Love Foundation, an umbrella body for the family’s commercial and charitable projects.

Three corporations have emerged from these activities: the Marley Beverage Company, Marley Coffee, and the House of Marley - an audio equipment and accessories business with the slogan, “Made better to make a difference”.

While Rita oversees the organisation and Marley’s son Ziggy is the best-known of his musician children, the business face of the House of Marley is Ziggy’s brother Rohan: a larger-than-life



Rohan Marley signs an autograph for a fan, Rabbi Jason Miller of Michigan.

character who exudes the family mission to “Keep Bob’s vision of hope and unity alive”.

At CES, he mixed freely with customers at the House of Marley booth and posed for impromptu cellphone photo shoots. One fan for whom he signed autographs, Rabbi Jason Miller of the Kosher Certification Agency, Michigan, delighted in comparing his Chai medallion with the Magen David Marley wears.

During an interview, Marley was more eager to speak of his love for South Africa than of the company’s headphones.

He had visited South Africa with brothers Ziggy and Stephen for the 2010 World Cup, and again last year to launch the House of Marley headphone range - both low-key visits.

“Last year was really awesome from a social point of view, because connecting with the people of Africa is close to my heart. I spent time in Johannesburg, Durban and Pretoria for the World Cup. When I returned it felt so comfortable and so familiar.

“It was so great to contribute something to South Africa and to the causes we worked with. It was part of our father’s dream, and part of our dream, too, to give something to Africa. Our plan is to spend more time in South Africa, helping to grow our business

and contribute to social responsibility.”

The House of Marley headphones and accessories stand out dramatically against the background of numerous shiny silver and white devices that proliferate at an event like CES. Most Marley products are encased in a recycled fabric in brown and green earthy colours, complementing the reggae colours associated with Bob Marley. Rohan is adamant that the House of Marley is only partly about shifting product.

“What we’re doing is just a vehicle, that helps develop sustainability, helps make this world a better place. It’s wonderful to create stuff, but what’s behind it?

“I can’t find a better place than Africa to create opportunities to show this thinking. The House of Marley colours feel African, because that’s our roots.”

The most fascinating aspect of these products, one unlikely to be matched by a Fabregas or Ludacris, is their recycled components.

“We’re using recycled aluminum, FSC-certified (the organisation that promotes responsible management of the world’s forests) wood, bamboo, organic content, natural fibres, recycled plastic, recycled pulp for packaging, and even soya bean ink. And we created a patented fabric called Rewind, made from recycled water bottles, hemp and condoms.”

The fabric alone carries an air of rebellion that one suspects Bob Marley would have enjoyed. Rohan agrees.

“We have to be revolutionary. As a musical revolutionary, one must be progressive and be part of change.”

• *Arthur Goldstuck is founder of World Wide Worx and editor-in-chief of Gadget. Follow him on Twitter on @art2gee*



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Bright and early, as KDVPPTS kids pack for Pesach

SANDRA HIRSCH

It was a beautiful Sunday morning. The learners from King David Victory Park Primary School were up bright and early. It was time to go help the Chevrah Kadisha pack boxes for Pesach for those less fortunate than themselves. Bright eyed and bushy tailed, they all got busy, but took time off to have a photograph with the Matzah Man.



KDVPPTS celebrates Pesach with a bang

Photo: Sandra Hirsch

Soul Workout waves the green banner

Soul Workout an innovative Jewish outreach group, is leading from the front by advancing a variety of educational and awareness projects highlighting eco-friendliness, environmentalism and conservation. With Green Peace (leading conservation group), Soul Workout held an interactive outdoor drive in Glenhazel and they also ran a Gauteng Jewish schools competition on eco-friendliness which was won by Natalia Laffer Liebson from King David Sandton. In this week's Jewish Report, a Soul Workout water conservation chart brings to light the challenges we face and the vital importance of considering our role in preserving this precious commodity. "We have found a positive synergy with South African Breweries who focus extensively on environmentalism," says Rabbi Ilan Herrmann of Soul Workout. Soul Workout's next plan of action is helping to assist with better sanitation, water availability and hygiene, to a marginalised school in Soweto.

Holy

Wholly



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Getting to know what SAUJS is all about



SAUJS members gather together to enjoy pizza and learn more about the organisation's different committees.
PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

On Tuesday, February 19, SAUJS hosted their first event of the year – “Meet, Eat and Greet”. SAUJS said in a media release it was aimed at students who wanted to know more about the different portfolios within SAUJS, as well as giving them the opportunity to meet the heads of each portfolio. It was an immense success as over 50 students attended, while not only enjoying the food and company, but also learning more about what the SAUJS committees have to offer. SAUJS is hoping to expand through these events and create committees within the main universities, such as Wits and UJ, as it is important to get students involved in this remarkable organisation.

Sofer Drutman demonstrates his skills at Torah Academy Nursery School

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL PELS

Zalman Abeshouse, Ben Lieb and Saul Lees watch as sofer Rael Drutman writes a letter in the l'chaim Sefer Torah.

The Sefer Torah has been commissioned by Joe and Louise Rabin and family in honour of their granddaughter Chaya Mushka for a refuah shleimah (speedy recovery), long life and good health.

The sofer, Rael Drutman, did a demonstration for the children at the Torah Academy Nursery School, last week.

Parents joined in after school to buy a letter or word in the Sefer Torah.



Photo: Michelle Vinokur

Meet our Minnie Bersohn winemakers

MICHELLE VINOKUR

Minnie Bersohn Senior and grade R groups made wine by squeezing grapes and placing sugar into the container. The children are watching the grapes ferment. It's very exciting to have our own made wine at our Pesach seder!

Pictured are Joan Lurie; Mischa Suchard; Leora Joffe; Aidan Goralsky; Jami Levin; and Tayla Jankelowitz.

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Lamb adds special flavour to Pesach seders

Cookery expert SHARON LURIE, writes that there is no need to ‘rack your brain’ for Chol Hamoed meal ideas when delicious rack of lamb is the answer.

MARINATED LADDERS OF LAMB RIBS WITH FRESH CORIANDER AND HONEY

I am always amazed at how the simple freshness of lemons and the natural tastes of herbs, marry to create the perfect lamb dish. Lamb infused with these wonderful flavours can only be destined for a great future!

- 5 ladders of lamb (these are breasts of lamb cut into steakhouse racks - there should be plus minus seven ribs per rack)
- 35 g (1 cellophane packet) fresh parsley
- 8 rosemary twigs (remove needles from stem)
- 35 g fresh mint
- 35 g fresh coriander/cilantro/dhania
- 5 cloves crushed garlic
- 3 cm fresh ginger (peeled and sliced)
- 1 - 2 chillies seeded (depends on how hot and spicy you want it)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 cup oil
- 4 Tbsp honey
- 2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- 4 Tbsp water

Method:

1. Place racks into glass rectangular dish, lying side by side.
2. Blitz together all the remaining ingredients in a blender or food processor.
3. Pour over lamb and allow to marinate, covered, overnight.
4. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
5. Heat up a heavy cast iron pot/pan.
6. Remove the meat from the marinade and shake off the excess. (Keep the marinade to use later).
7. Sear well on all sides, about 5 - 8 minutes until nicely browned.
8. Transfer to a baking/roasting tray and cook in the oven, uncovered, bone side down, for about 30 minutes.
9. Reduce the heat to 160°C and allow to cook for a further 30 minutes.
10. Meanwhile, bring the remaining marinade to the boil. (For health reasons it is important to boil the marinade as it has been in contact with raw meat).
11. Once the ladders are done to your specifications, remove and place on



12. Pour hot marinade over lamb and serve.
13. Should you prefer to serve them cut up individually, then do so before putting them in the oven.

Feeds 5 - 6 people

HERB ENCRUSTED RACKS OF LAMB RIBS AND GARLIC MASHED POTATOES

Although the photograph for this recipe shows a rack of lamb chops, I have chosen to use a rack of lamb ribs as it is a far more economical cut.

- 5 lamb ladders (plus minus 7 ribs per rack)
- 1/2 cup finely grated onion
- Little oil for frying

- 1 tsp sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 Tbsp finely chopped parsley
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped rosemary
- 2 tsp coarsely ground pepper
- 1 cup matzah meal
- 1/2 tsp salt

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 170°C.
2. Brown lamb in a large frying pan until golden brown on both sides. Don't allow bottom of pan to burn as you still need to fry the onions in this pan.
3. Once they are golden brown, cover with lid and allow ribs to simmer on very low heat for about 10 - 15 minutes.

4. Remove from heat and place into roasting dish and cover with foil.
5. To the same pan in which the lamb was frying, place a little more oil and fry the onions.
6. Add sugar and continue to cook until golden brown, then add water; stir well to get all the little bits of lovely brown onion and meat off the bottom of the pan.
7. Remove from heat and add matzah meal, parsley, rosemary and pepper and mix until well combined. You don't want this crust to be soggy like a stuffing, but rather nicely coated in the oil and herb mixture.
8. Remove the tin foil off the lamb and pack the stuffing onto the top, meaty side of the lamb ladders.
9. Once equally distributed over the lamb, place into oven, uncovered and roast for 30 minutes until crust is crispy.
10. Reduce heat to 140°C to keep them warm, but don't cover as the crust will go soft.
11. Serve with garlic infused mashed potatoes and glazed carrots.

Feeds 6 people

GLAZED CARROTS

- 1 kg carrots peeled and sliced into 1 cm pieces (not too thin)
- 2 cups boiling water (the water doesn't have to cover the carrots completely as they will steam with the lid on. You want most of the water to evaporate so that the oil left in the pot glazes the carrots.)
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt

Method:

1. Place the sliced carrots into a medium sized saucepan as you don't want the water to evaporate too quickly in a large pot. Cover with a loosely lying lid.
2. Cook until most of the water has evaporated and the oil lightly glazes the carrots. The oil will crackle when the water has evaporated! They're ready; don't let them crackle too long as they will burn.

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Yes, and on top of it, it’s Pesachdik!

PESACH CHOUX PUFFS

Cookery expert SHARON LURIE, author of “Cooking with the Kosher Butcher’s Wife” and “Celebrating with the Kosher Butcher’s Wife”, writes: “As somebody who loves experimenting, I decided to challenge myself to something a little different this Pesach.

“If I don’t hear those famous words: ‘I can’t believe it’s Pesachdik’, just once over Pesach, then I feel I haven’t fulfilled my duty!

“This is one of those recipes I know will do it. Why? Well, some time ago, while in my kitchen (where I have to admit traffic is very heavy) each and every person that used this main thoroughfare remarked “THOSE are for Pesach? NO WAY!”

“Yes, yes, yes, we have gluten-free Pesach profiteroles.


“There are actually so many different fillings one could use - and I’m sure you have a few yourselves. However, here are some to get you rolling. Chopped liver (as per photograph), guacamole and smoked salmon, tuna mayonnaise, chicken mayonnaise or simply fill them with sweet cream (Orly Whip) and glaze with chocolate.

- 1/3 cup margarine /oil
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/3 cup potato flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda (gefen)
- 2 eggs (extra large, not jumbo)

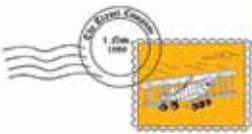
Method:



1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, dissolve the margarine in water.
3. Remove from heat and pour into a glass mixing bowl or the bowl of your Mixmaster.
4. Add all the potato flour and baking soda at once and start beating immediately with an electric hand beater or in your Mixmaster with the “K” attachment.
5. Slowly add eggs, one at a time, while still beating and continue to beat until smooth and satiny.
6. The choux mixture should be firm enough to place tablespoons on to the tray without them spreading.
7. Place tablespoons of mixture on to baking tray and bake for 35 minutes, then switch off the oven and leave choux puffs in for another 10 minutes, to dry out.
8. Remove from oven and when you’re ready to fill them, cut the tops off fill and replace lids.

If you’re making savoury puffs, then the tops can be painted with a little sweet chilli sauce for that extra gloss.




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Bringing light into the dark world

In this week’s Torah portion, Parshat Tzav, which immediately precedes the festival of Pesach (Passover), many details of offerings in the Beit Hamikdash, is discussed.

The night of Pesach is known as a “night of guarding” as the verse in parshat Shemot (12:42) the verse states: “It is a night of guarding for the L-rd, to take them out of the land of Egypt; this night is the L-rd’s, guarding all the children of Israel throughout their generations.”

What does the verse mean by “a night of guarding”? Why is the word “guarding” repeated twice in the verse?

The Kli Yakar, Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Luntshits, a student of the great Maharshal, provides us with a beautiful explanation. On the night Hashem took us out of the land of Egypt, we were given a very special task: the Pascal lamb offering.

Despite the inherent danger of this sacrifice, the Children of Israel performed this sacrifice with alacrity, fulfilling all its details perfectly.

The Kli Yakar explains using the midrash Deuteronomy Rabbah: “You guard my light and I will guard your light.”

Bnei Yisrael guarded the Korban Pesach on the night they were taken out of Egypt. Because of this, Hashem provided extra-special protection when leaving Egypt, so to today Hashem guards our souls, which are in His hands because we guard Hashem’s Torah and mitzvoth in this world.

The seder night is a night where Hashem appreciates and gives thanks to us for our role in guarding Torah and mitzvoth, a special gift from Hashem to Bnei Yisrael.

The Torah is referred to as light and the mitzvoth contained in the Torah as candles. After women light Shabbat candles on a Friday night, a very moving request is recited, in which she asks Hashem that her children grow up to be children who are G-d-fearing, who bring light into this world and who are Talmidai Chachamim (wise students of the Torah). Chazal teaches that Talmidai Chachamim bring shalom (peace) into the world.

Unfortunately, the world we live in today is fuelled with intolerance and hatred.

When we sit around our Pesach seder on Monday night with our children, family and friends, we must remember that this is the night when Hashem affords us extra-special protection because of our role of teaching and upholding his Torah.



PARSHAT TZAV
Rabbi Yoni Lipschitz
Mizrachi Shul,
Glenhazel

If we wish to bring peace and harmony into the world, we must teach our children that our Torah is one of peace, harmony and tolerance.

It is our ability to bring light into this dark world, when we all come together as one nation and learn and discuss Torah and the exodus from Egypt, as a strong collective and do what G-d has created the Jewish nation for, to teach our children Torah, to sanctify Hashem’s name in the world, to instil a strong moral code. His will bring peace and harmony into the world.

Wishing you all a chag Kasher ve Sameach.

Ancient tales reveal answers to life’s mysteries

The Jewish Learning Institute, a division of Chabad’s adult educational programmes presents a new six-session course that will begin right after Pesach. It is called “Curious Tales of the Talmud: Finding Yourself in the Legends of Our Sages”.

Rabbi Ari Kievman, in a media release said he would conduct the six course sessions at several locations at Chabad House in Savoy, at Chabad’s Goodness and Kindness Centre in Sandton Central, as well as at other locations.

“We’ll explore the mystical dimension of the Talmud called the Aggadah, to uncover wisdom from some of the zaniest and most epic legends you’ll ever encounter,” he said. “This is a chance for the public to unravel layers of personal meaning from texts not usually available to non-scholars.”

Rabbi Kievman says in “Curious Tales of the Talmud”, participants will encounter legends of gargantuan sea monsters, impossible feats, anthropomorphisms, and riddles that

challenge the foundations of the Jewish faith. In deciphering the meaning behind these strange episodes, students will discover secrets containing profound insights into the meaning of life.

“Whether you are fascinated by the Talmud and Jewish mysticism, or whether you are seeking a fun and meaningful experience, you won’t want to miss this course. The material is as relevant as ever, promising to deepen the way we understand ourselves, our universe, and our relationships with the people we love.”

Like all JLI programmes, “Curious Tales of the Talmud” is designed to appeal to people at all levels of Jewish knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning.

• For more information, call (011) 440-6600 or visit www.JoburgJLI.co.za

Some communal seders this Pesach

SHARON AKUM

Various community institutions are organising communal seders or facilities whereby community members may be able to have meals during Pesach:

Beit Emanuel Progressive Synagogue, Parktown: first night seder, after the evening service. Adults: R220; children aged between 7 and 13: R90; children under 7: R30. Call (011) 646-6170.

Chabad House, Sandton: second night seder at the Chabad Goodness and Kindness Centre, 8 Stella

Street, Sandton. Adults: R250. Call Batya: 072-801-7491.

Durban United Hebrew Congregation: first night seder, after the service at the Great Synagogue. Adults: R285; children under 10: R110. Call (031) 201-5177.

Greenside Shul: first night seder. Adults: R250; Children 13 years and under: R125. Call (011)788-5036.

During Pesach, Avron’s Place in Sea Point offers lunch and dinner. It asks that bookings be made two to three days in advance: (021) 439-7610.

Wishing the Jewish community

Chag Sameach

Centre Management

011 884 0592

Nationals

Clicks

Food Lover's Market

Woolworths Foods

011 783 2696

011 784 4618

011 783 8200

Fashion & Accessories

Kazu Ladies & Men's Designer

Wear & Accessories

Rage

Sunglass Discount Warehouse

Meoli Maternity Wear

011 883 7877

011 884 8781

011 884 2006

011 784 2039

Restaurants

Mochaco's

Kauai

Minamoto Japanese Restaurant

Vasili's Meiteranean Cuisine

Piza e Vino

Seattle Coffee Company

011 784 0670

011 883 4445

011 784 3954

011 884 1098

079 777 2535

079 509 9999

Health & Beauty

Lewis Moore and Wood General Practitioners

Morningside Dispensary

Sorbet Nails

The Firm

The Wedge Optometrist

Zen Hot Yoga

Babor Beauty Spa – Mo Beautiful You

Avanti Hair

Hindustan Hair Products

011 783 2906

011 883 6588

011 884 9262

011 783 4495

011 783 5151

082 890 5716

Opening Soon

Opening Soon

Opening Soon

Homeware & Gifts

Homely's

011 026 3379

Speciality Shops

Kong Tai Supermarket

Village Vetshop

011 884 1095

011 883 0004

Services

Global Photographic, Copy & Print services

IFA

Morningside Post Office

Rawson Properties

VIP Dry Cleaners

011 324 2700

011 320 3311

011 783 4053

079 205 5948

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FREE PARKING

ALL DAY EVERY DAY

Matza with guacamole

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp (30ml) Westfalia Avocado Oil garlic flavoured infusion
- 10 spring onions, chopped
- 1 chilli, finely chopped
- 1/3 cup (80ml) coriander, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp (30ml) parsley, chopped
- 1½ cups (375ml) mature cheddar, finely grated
- 10 Matza crackers
- 1 tub (200g) Westfalia Spicy Guacamole

Method

- Heat avocado oil in a non-stick pan and sauté onions and chilli until softened.
- Leave to cool, then add coriander, parsley and cheddar and mix well.
- 1/3 cup grated cheese melted over Matza crackers.
- Serve with Westfalia Spicy Guacamole on the side

Serves 4

0% cholesterol

Healthy alternative

Versatile

Ideal for sauteing, roasting and braaing

High smoke point of +/-250°C

Endosed by the SA Heart and Stroke Foundation

Certified Halaal and Kosher

NO CHOLESTEROL

HEART

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Westfalia

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Refuge of politically bankrupt

I have just returned from a weekend in Thessaloniki, Greece. March 15 marked exactly 70 years since the first of 19 transports to Auschwitz, each carrying 2 500 – 3 000 souls, took place.

Only a handful of those transported returned; the entire Jewish community of Thessaloniki, once known as “Jerusalem of the Balkans”, was all but wiped out.

At the ceremony in the synagogue Natan Sharansky reminded the crowd about the growing “othering” of the Jews in the 1930s, including allegations of their supposed disloyalty.

Indeed, accusing Jews of lacking loyalty to their country is a classic form of anti-Semitism.

In light of this fraught history, the SAJBD was profoundly shocked when Deputy Minister Marius Fransman levelled a series of charges of disloyalty against it last week.

The SAJBD, he said, needed to “act South African”, “be more patriotic” and ask itself whether it represented South African Jewry or the Israeli government. He pointedly drew attention to the fact that members of the “white elite” that was allegedly benefiting at the expense of Cape Town’s black, coloured and Muslim communities, were Jewish.

The Board was accused of undermining the ANC’s transformation of the CBD and Cape Flats aimed at uplifting the disadvantaged.

What occasioned Fransman’s outbursts was the SAJBD’s press statement condemning his previous remark made in the course of a radio




Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

interview in which he alleged that Jewish businessmen in Cape Town had unfairly benefited at the expense of the Muslim community.

Far from conceding anything was wrong with this inflammatory statement, he responded by accusing the SAJBD, the elected, representative voice and civil rights lobby of SA Jewry, of being disloyal to SA. Such rhetoric, particularly when emanating from government, needs to be met with more than condemnation. The Board has since lodged a formal complaint with the SA Human Rights Commission, outlining in detail why these defamatory statements are unacceptable to SA Jewry.

A red line has been crossed. We have every intention of doing whatever is required to ensure that the matter is appropriately dealt with.

Coinciding with the deputy minister’s comments was the disruption of a piano recital by an Israeli artist at Wits University.

It is encouraging to note that the university leadership have unequivocally condemned the incident and is applying the full procedures available to rectify and deal with the situation.

Wits remains a world-renowned centre of higher learning, and Jews have made a significant contribution to what the institution has achieved over the decades. We are confident that the current leadership is committed to upholding the principles of academic freedom and non-discrimination on which it bases itself.

• *Listen to Steven Gruzd on Jewish Board Talk on 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00-13:00.*

This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

A column of the Hebrew Order of David

HOD - Jewish fraternity network

The word “order” in the title Hebrew Order of David International seems to suggest the presence of Masonry and even conjures up images of clandestine activities. It’s a question often asked and the mystique has been perpetuated over the years.

It is true that our founding fathers were probably Masons and based the Order on Masonry, but that is where the similarity ends.

At its core the Hebrew Order of David International is a Jewish fraternity; the members are connected in a network which aims to look after its members while assisting those in the community less fortunate than ourselves.

We are a human network as opposed to the Facebooks, LinkedIns and Twitters of the virtual world. A network of real people linked by our faith and the concept of treating others the way we want to be treated as described in the Torah as “V’Ahavta L’reacha Kamocha”.

With such noble sentiments and a track record of over 100 years, we enjoy a universal appeal to Jewish men around the world.

We offer opportunities at every level. The structure of the Order is designed to allow members to express their skills and talents within their local communities and to extend their abilities nationally and internationally. Lodges are working in SA, the UK, the USA, Canada and Israel.

With its roots in SA since 1904, the Order is growing the number of lodges internationally. Few, if any, Jewish organisations offer such opportunities for the Jewish male. The lodges




Above Board
Stan Klaff
Grand President

are all regularly constituted and bound together by a universal Constitution taking cognisance of the laws of the countries in which we have a presence.

We do meet behind closed doors and we do adhere to certain rituals because our meetings are held in a manner which inspires decorum and upholds dignity and respect.

Our dedication to chesed and deeds of loving-kindness is based on the principle of distributing the profits of our endeavours to those in need.

We do not dole out cash, but rather we have a policy of determining the needs of beneficiaries and then delivering or

assisting in the purchase of the items requested.

Our sponsors and benefactors understand and support this wholeheartedly and we are enormously grateful to a generous community.

In a world which is in turmoil and in which the gap between rich and poor is constantly widening, the Hebrew Order of David International is a home from which Jewish men of all ages can make a difference.

It is the base from which you can work to give something back to the community.

It is a network for you to grow and make friends across the world. We stand against anti-Semitism and inter-marriage and we offer an organisation with resources to engage in the alleviation of suffering across all communities.

I take this opportunity to wish you and your families, wherever they may be, a wonderful and meaningful seder, and Chag Pesach Kasher ve’Sameach.

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A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Concerning charity



ChevrahKadisha
AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY WELFARE

Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff
Group CEO

There are so many worthy causes out there that you might think you can't really go wrong as long as you're giving charity. But I think you can.

Your hard-earned money shouldn't be dished out in an arbitrary or indiscriminate manner. In fact, the same serious consideration that is given to buying a new car should be applied to your charity disbursements. The decision needs a well-thought through, responsible approach.

For starters, it's not just because "local is lekker" that I campaign to keep our charity funds in the country. The real issue is that we desperately need it here and surely we should take care of our own first?

Torah supports this point of view when it tells us that "the poor of your city take precedence over those of another" (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deiah 351:3).

Certainly, there are many legitimate reasons to give overseas - and Israel is very close to all our hearts - but there are priorities to be considered. Who will take care of our own community, particularly in the future, while we are supporting causes beyond our shores?

I think we might be horrified if we could quantify just how much

is being collectively exported.

Like those in the business of selling cars, there are many charities in the business of charity. That's how they make their money - it's their raison d'être. In order to keep going, they must take funds off the top for salaries and administration costs. That's a question on its own. Another is how much they take.

Other questions to add to your donor checklist could be:

- How essential are the causes?
- How much is spent on operating costs, marketing and advertising? In other words, how much actually makes its way to the recipient of your kindness?
- Are the financials audited, legitimate and a matter of public record?
- How evenly should your charity pie be sliced? Shouldn't the bulk of the pie go to those carrying the most responsibility?

The Chev qualifies on all counts and can answer all of your questions in a satisfactory way. What we find challenging is that many in our wonderful, generous (naïve?) community don't ask them before making their decisions.

May our partnership continue to thrive!

Feel free to contact me on feedback@thechev.org.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

A column of WIZO South Africa

WIZO journey brings kids at risk to a safe haven

Dear Chaverot,

Pesach is around the corner; that vast canvas of desert sands, Pharaoh's palace and Moses leading the Jewish slaves out of bondage, flashes across the mind's eye.

Journeys imply a leaving behind, a taking with and a going to... and the Exodus was no exception.

The Jews left submission and hardship behind, took with them little, besides unleavened bread, and underwent a long journey to deliverance.

How many times since, have Jews made the journey; fleeing from the tortures of the Inquisition and the Crusades; from the brutality of the pogroms, and for those who were able, from the impending doom of the Holocaust?

The over 800 000 Jews who were expelled from Arab lands since the founding of the Jewish State, left generations of tradition and wealth and came as refugees, mostly to Israel, which, as a fledgling state, could offer little more than makeshift dwellings, malaria-infested swamps and hostile neighbours.

And still the journeys continued... from the former Soviet Union came nearly three quarters of a million Jews, and Operation Moses, brought waves of Ethiopians who had waited so patiently to journey to the Promised Land.

WIZO Israel witnesses personal journeys on an ongoing basis... new immigrants being helped to integrate into Israeli society and being encouraged by WIZO volunteers to keep their traditions and crafts... desperate mothers running away from physical abuse,



WIZO South Africa
Tamar Lazarus
President

carrying small children with them and finding refuge in WIZO safe houses...

Children living in poverty and neglect, being brought to WIZO day-care centres, where they receive care and food in a nurturing environment... Children being removed from a threatening situation and being taken to live with foster parents who provide them with security and love... And children, whose homes cannot provide them with even the basic requirements, entering children's villages or hostels and flourishing physically, mentally and emotionally.

Just a week ago, WIZO Nahalal Youth Village in Israel was awarded the Education Prize for 2012/2013,

from the Ministry of Education. WIZO Nahalal is one of eight WIZO youth villages and boarding schools where the likes of Chana Senesh studied when she arrived to then Palestine.

This award is testament to the high standard of WIZO's facilities and we are very proud of this achievement.

WIZO women in SA, and around the world, also find themselves on a journey... of volunteerism, of satisfaction and of friendships forged with love and laughter.

The journey we are on leaves emptiness behind and needs only commitment for sustenance. The rewards are deeply gratifying and are reinforced each time we visit our amazing projects in Israel.

Chag Sameach to you all and may your Pesach journey be a rich and fulfilling one.

This column is paid for by the WIZO South Africa



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Pick n Pay launches its 2013 Pesach collection in Jhb



Liora Leslie doing her Pesach shopping at Pick n Pay, Norwood.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Amidst 12 types of matzah and many goodies and specialties, the marketing staff of Pick n Pay in collaboration with the leadership of Johannesburg’s Jewry, formally launched the Pesach collection for 2013, at the HOD in Orchards last week.

Dave Ramsden, Pick n Pay’s divisional manager for marketing and sales, who was MC at the event, explained how the supermarket chain was run to cater to the cultural priorities of the citizens in suburbs near each centre, adding that serving Johannesburg Jewry always represented a learning curve for Pick n Pay.

He was supported by Masly Notrica, divisional manager for imports, whose responsibility also lies in the kosher division. In promoting the comprehensiveness of the Pesach range, Notrica explained some of the challenges he has faced this year, because Pesach is earlier than it has been in the past. “Also the Consumer Protection Act, in effect from March 2013, has restricted ranges we could bring.”

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein reminded the guests that some years ago, the convenience of a supermarket with rows of kosher goods didn’t exist. “We must not take this for granted,” he said, commenting on how “kasher” and “sameach” wishes over Pesach are not mutually exclusive for some, because of all the hard word the chag entails.

Saul Tomson of the Chevrah Kadisha, added gravitas to the event in commending Pick n Pay in its assistance with collecting food for distribution to the community’s needy; the initiative has developed to collect 750 boxes of Pesach goods.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, at the Pick n Pay launch last week.

Chag Sameach!

This Pesach, may your cup overflow with goodness and happiness.

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ABCs of Passover

RABBI SHRAGA SIMMONS

Pesach is known as the “holiday of freedom”, commemorating the Jewish Exodus from Egypt following 210 years of slavery. Pass-over is regarded as the “birth” of the Jewish nation, and its lessons of struggle and identity continue to form the basis of Jewish consciousness 3 300 years after the event.

Passover is an eight-day holiday (in Israel, seven days). The name derives from the fact that during the final plague - the slaying of the first-born – G-d “passed over” the Jewish homes.

Seder night

The holiday is marked by the celebration of an elaborate seder on the first two nights (in Israel, on the first night only). The seder is designed to give each Jew the experience of “going from slavery unto freedom”.

As recorded in the Haggadah, we tell the Exodus story and recount the Ten Plagues. We eat symbols of slavery and freedom, and the festive meal includes many delicious recipes for foods that people look forward to all year (think matzah balls!). We recite the Hallel prayer of praise, and end the seder with the hope of “Next year in Jerusalem!”

The seder is a special tie of family bonding and children are a particular focus of the night. They enjoy a variety of Passover songs like the Four Questions (Ma Nishatana), tell of the Four Sons, sing the “Dayenu” song, try to “steal” the Afikoman, and open the door for Elijah the Prophet.

Matzah

At the seder, it is a special mitzvah to eat matzah, the seder’s main symbol. Everyone should try to eat 2/3 of a square matzah (or 1/2 of a round matzah) within four minutes, while leaning to the left.

The most common reason for eating matzah is that on the morning of the Exodus, the Jews were so rushed in getting out of Egypt that the bread didn’t have time to rise. At the end of the festive meal, the special “dessert” is another piece of matzah, called the Afikoman.

Four cups

At the seder, we drink four cups of wine - corresponding to the four expressions of freedom mentioned in the Torah (Exodus 6:6-7). Everyone should have their own cup, which holds minimally 98cc (3,3 oz).

Try to drink the entire cup for each of the Four Cups (or at least drink a majority) within four minutes. And as an expression of freedom, we lean to the left and back while drinking the Four Cups.

Karpas

Toward the beginning of the seder, we eat karpas - a vegetable (such as celery, parsley, potato) dipped in saltwater, to commemorate the tears of hard labour.

Bitter herbs

Later in the seder, we eat maror, the bitter herbs. Though many have the custom of using horseradish, Romaine lettuce is also used. (“Red horseradish” in jars bought



from the stores should not be used, since it’s a mixture of mostly beets with some horseradish.)

The maror is dipped into charoset, a bricks-and-mortar mixture of dates, wine, nuts and apples.

Seder checklist

Seder means “order” because there are so many details to remember. Your seder table should include:

- A seder plate with:
- Celery, parsley or potato (Karpas)
- Lettuce (Maror)
- Horseradish (Chazeret)
- Charoset
- Roasted chicken wing (Zero’ah)
- Hard-boiled egg (Beitzah)
- Matzah cover with 3 matzot (and extra matzah)
- Wine and grape juice
- Haggadahs
- Cup for Elijah
- Saltwater
- Kiddush cups
- Pillows for reclining
- Afikomen prizes

Chametz-free zone

During the week of Passover, Jews are forbidden to eat or possess any chametz (leavened grain). For this reason, we dispose of (or sell) all bread, cookies, pasta, beer, etc. - and purchase only products labelled “Kosher for Passover”. (Ashkenazi Jews also refrain from eating kitniyot - rice, beans, etc.)

To avoid any problems of residual chametz, we also have special sets of dishes and pots for Passover. As a practical consideration, many people start cleaning for Passover weeks before the holiday begins.

Search-and-burn

On the evening before Passover, we conduct a careful search of the home for chametz. It is done by candlelight and is a memorable experience for the whole family. Any remaining chametz is either burned the next morning (in a ceremony called Sray’fat Chametz), or is sold to a non-Jew for the week of Passover.

The sale must be serious and legally binding; it should be done only through the assistance of a qualified rabbi. Any food that is sold must be put in a cabinet and taped shut.

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What's On

Today, Friday (March 22)

- Elise WIZO Gift Shop is selling its wares at the Pesach Yomtov Market at the Norwood Mall, until March 24. An exciting range of Pesach gifts.
- UZLC hosts Jack Bloom from the DA on “Is there a safe and prosperous future for South Africa?” Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria, 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.
- UJW CT’s adult education division hosts Miri Eisen who will talk on “The Israeli Intelligence Community”. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Entrance: R20 (inc refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

Sunday (March 24)

- RGHCC shows the Academy Award nominated documentary, “Berkeley in the Sixties”. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R70 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378, e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net, or www.greatpark.co.za
- Second Innings is hosting Hilary Semple who will talk on “Shakespeare’s Fathers and Daughters”. The venue is the The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Contact: Grecia, (011) 532-9718. All talks are R20 entrance for Second Innings members and R40 for non-members.

Monday (March 25)

- Greenside Shul hosts its Pesach seder on 1st night Pesach. All welcome. Please call the office soonest on (011) 788-5036, if you want to join the seder, Adults R250, children 13 years and younger, R125.
- WIZO’s “Lunch and Learn” shiur with Rabbi Michael Katz takes place every Thursday at Beyachad. Time: 13:00. Contact: Joyce 082-446-0480.
- UJW CT’s adult education division hosts Petra Muller who talk on her poetry. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30.

Entrance: R20 (inc refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

R40 (incl tea and refreshments). Contact: Sandy (011) 645-2515.

Friday (April 5)

- United Sisterhood’s “Book Sale” takes place at Benmore Gardens Shopping Centre. Unwanted books and magazines donations are gladly accepted. Contact: Phone (011) 646-2409, fax (011) 646-4654.

Wednesday (April 10)

- UJW CT’s adult education department will host attorney Michael Bagraim who will talk on “The Risks of Working Abroad”. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Entrance: R20 (incl refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

Tuesday (April 9)

- WIZO Forum’s “Yom Hashoah Commemoration” takes place at Beyachad. Time: 09:30. Candle-lighting. Haskarah by Chazan Chilly Chrysler. Also showing a Holocaust film about Felix Zandman, a Polish Jew, who escaped and hid from the Nazis. Cost:

Thursday (April 11)

- UJW CT’s Simcha Group will be holding a “Quiz Evening”. The venue is the Marais Road Synagogue Hall. Time: 19:30 for 20:00. Entrance: R40. Enquiries: Hermoine Sternberg 082-439-8006/(021) 433-2415.

- Chabad Chai Seniors Club meets Monday to Friday every week, 09:00 to 13:00. Venue: Chabad House. Refreshments and lunch provided. Mondays: Brain exercises with occupational therapist and computers and Internet (16:15). Tuesdays: Exploring the myths and mysteries of Judaism. Ladies learning with Aviva Goldman. Wednesdays: Torah studies and computer and Internet training (16:30). Thursdays: Living with the times with Rabbi Shlomo Raitport and ladies shiur with Rebbetzen Chaya Haller. Fridays: Living Torah with Rabbi Shlomo Raitport. -Distribution of take-home food. Information: Chabad House (011) 440-6600, e-mail rak@chabad.org.za www.ChabadJoburg.org/seniors.
- WIZO Gift Shop: Order now for all your Pesach gifts. Situated at the bottom level of the Genesis Shopping Centre, Sandler Road, Fairmount (entrance from Bradfield Drive opposite Shula’s Bakery). Hours: Mon - Thurs 09:00 - 17:00, Friday 09:00 - 13:30. Open on Sundays February 17, March 17 and 24. Contact (011) 640-2760.
- Orchid WIZO Florist, for chuppahs in shuls or gardens; canopy, drapes and floral arrangements our specialty. Daily deliveries of floral and fruit arrangements as well. Contact: (011) 728-4513, after hours: (011) 728-2769.
- Bnoth Zion Association WIZO is collecting anything of value for its store. Contact (021) 464-6729 or Linda Saban 072-245-3225 or Cherna Kreda 084-589-8588.
- Johannesburg Children’s Home is appealing for shoes and takkies for children and teenagers. Contact Edna or Hylton Segal (011) 970-4266.
- Intimate Antiques Fair held on last Sunday of every month at Cedar Square corner Witkoppen/Cedar Avenue in Fourways, from 09:00 - 16:00. Contact Robyn 083-311-4768.
- The Selwyn Segal Shop has a huge selection of gifts ranging in price from R30 upwards. Visit them from Monday to Friday, 08:30 to 14:00. Phone (011) 640-6413 or (011) 640-5171. All proceeds to The Selwyn Segal Foundation for the Mentally Handicapped.
- Join WIZO every Thursday for a “Lunch & Learn” shiur with Rabbi Michael Katz, 13:00 - 14:00 at Beyachad. Information: Joyce (011) 640-2416.
- Stellenbosch Hebrew Congregation has a Friday evening service every week in shul, starting at 18:45. Contact (021) 886-5257.
- The Yiddish Academy offers weekly basic, intermediate and advanced classes on Monday evenings at 19:30, Tuesday mornings at 10:30 and Thursday evenings at 19:30 at the RGHCC, Glenhove Road, Houghton. Conversational groups. Details: e-mail yiddishacademy@gmail.com or call Hazel Cohen on (011) 728-8088.
- Supervised bridge with Jeff Sapire Tuesday morning 10:00 - 12:00 (intermediary) and Wednesday morning 10:00 - 12:00 (advanced), at the Clive M Beck Auditorium. Booking: Hazel or René, (011) 728-8088/8378. E-mail: hazelc@greatpark.co.za or renes@greatpark.co.za
- Beis Midrash Chofetz Chaim is offering a second ma’ariv minyan every weekday evening (Monday - Friday) at 21:00, cnr Elray and Michel Streets, Raedene. Open to broader community. Don’t fret if you need a later minyan. Secure parking provided.
- Sunday Scrabble Club meets every Sunday at 10:00 at Zahava’s, Grant Avenue, Norwood, off 9th Street. Cost R5. Players of all strengths welcome. Larry 082-888-5355.
- JWBS Johannesburg, urgently requires secondhand clothing, kitchenware, household goods, books and bric-a-brac for its secondhand shop. Contact (011) 485-5232.
- Celebrating a bar-/batmitzvah? Why not give a donation to WIZO’s bar-/batmitzvah project in Israel? You get a beautiful certificate to give to the bar-/batmitzvah child here. Certificates are available from WIZO tel (011) 645-2548.
- Second Innings runs a series of courses and activities including scrabble, bridge, discussion groups, play reading groups, women’s and men’s reading groups, symphony concert rehearsals, bowls, pilates, Yogic Pranayama, walking and aerobics, Golden Oldies Cine Club, weekly workshops (by arrangement) on “falls education for the elder adult”, and organises regular activities. For more details contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.
- Benarc Gift Shop has gift presentations for all occasions, made to order. Call (011) 485-5232, JWBS. All kosher under the Beth Din. Proceeds to support the less fortunate in our community.
- Elise WIZO Gift Shop has an exciting range of gifts available for all occasions and festivals. Contact (011) 620-2760 or call in at Genesis, bottom level of the Genesis Shopping Centre, 3 Bradfield Drive, Fairmount. Open Sundays.

An unorthodox book of Jewish jocks



ROCKING THE BOAT
Jack Milner

If you had to ask most Americans what they might consider their darkest moment in sport, many will bring up the 1919 World Baseball Series.

Of course, the concept of the World Series seems ridiculous to most of us as the only teams included are American. But one needs to understand that America’s fascination with baseball is almost a religious experience and when the Chicago White Sox took a bribe to lose the 1919 World Series final, it broke the heart of most Americans and sent shockwaves through the nation’s collective psyche.

The man who was believed to be behind the whole scheme was Arnold Rothstein who was nicknamed “the Brain”. He was a Jewish-American racketeer, businessman and gambler who became a kingpin of the Jewish mob in New York. Rothstein was widely reputed to have organised corruption in professional athletics, most notoriously conspiring in the fixing of the 1919 World Series.

Those who watch a series called Boardwalk Empire will come across Rothstein as one of the shady characters.

It was never proved that he did in fact fix the World Series, but he was called to Chicago to testify before a grand jury on the

incident. Rothstein insisted that he was an innocent businessman, intent on clearing his name and his reputation. Prosecutors could find no evidence linking him to the affair, and he was never indicted.

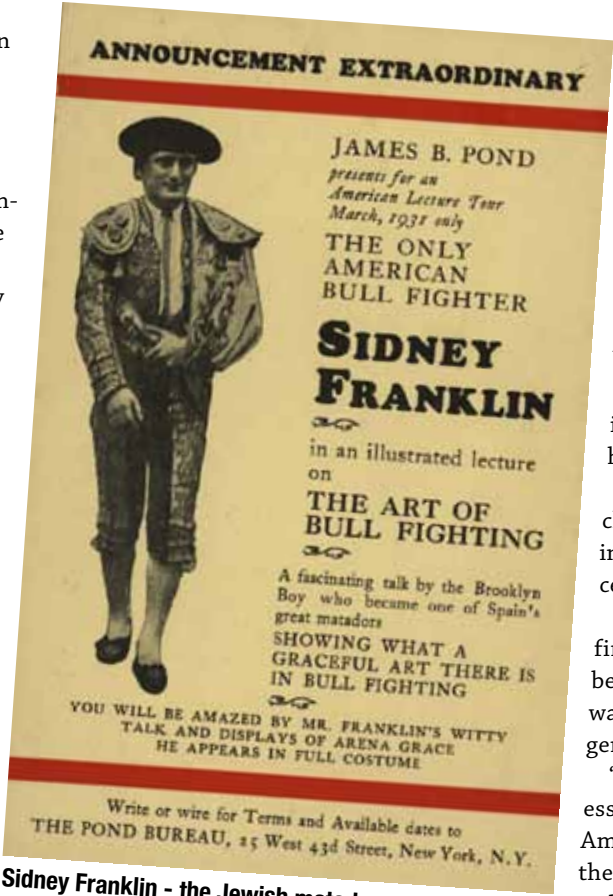
Like so many gangsters of his time, Rothstein’s life was cut short by a bullet and he died in 1928 at the age of 48.

Why the Rothstein story? The other day I came across a fascinating book of essays edited by Frank Foer and Marc Tracy, called “Jewish Jocks: An Unorthodox Hall of Fame”. The book contains 50 essays about sportsmen and people connected to sport. Most are American, but Foer and Tracy kick off with 18th-century British boxer Daniel Mendoza and include the likes of sports broadcaster Howard Cosell, as well as Hank Greenberg, Mark Spitz and Sandy Koufax.

There are some particularly interesting tales about a boxing cut-man, Whitney Bimstein, Brooklyn-born matador Sidney Franklin, ping-pong guru Marty Reisman and martial arts sensei Harvey “Sifu” Sober.

Bimstein boxed professionally and after 70 fights, he hung up his gloves and joined the US Navy during the First World War as a boxing instructor. When he left the navy, he decided to become a fulltime trainer.

Bimstein was in great demand and there were trainers who would only trust their boxers to him. He handled some of the best boxers of the era, including Jack Dempsey, Gene Tunney, James “Cinderella Man” Braddock, Rocky Marciano and Rocky



Sidney Franklin - the Jewish matador praised by Ernest Hemingway.

York Franklin went on to become the first (and as can be established the only) Jewish bullfighter.

Not too many sportsmen attracted the attention of someone like Ernest Hemingway, but in his book on bullfighting, “Death In The Afternoon”, Hemingway wrote: “Franklin is a better, more scientific, more intelligent, and more finished matador than all but about six of the full matadors in Spain today and the bullfighters know it and have the utmost respect for him.”

Of all the subjects profiled, Foer claims that Sandy Koufax was the most influential Jewish athlete of the 20th century.

When Koufax chose not to pitch the first game of the 1965 World Series because it fell on Yom Kippur, the action was applauded nationwide by Jews and gentiles alike.

“What he did on that Yom Kippur was essentially validate Jewish existence in America,” Foer explained. “He begged off the assignment to start a crucial game, and instead of being met with jeers, he was applauded for placing his Jewishness over his team.

“The fact that this moment has gone down in history in a sort of mythological way, sums up in a way why this country is different than any other country.”

This book is quirky, fascinating and a far cry from the old joke that the thinnest book in the library is the Encyclopaedia of Jewish Sports Stars.

King David youngsters in Gauteng rugby teams

JACK MILNER

Once again a group of King David School learners have been selected to play for the Lions Invitational President’s teams to play at both the St John’s and KES’s rugby festivals over the Easter weekend.

Three pupils from King David Victory Park and one from Linksfeld have been honoured this way. Of the Victory park trio, Justin Sher

has been selected to the Lions Invitational President’s A team to play at the St John’s Festival, while Tyron Sussman and Jake Schmidt will be off to the KES Festival.

The news for Tyron is even better as not only has he been named as captain of the team, but was invited to attend the Sharks Academy trials in KZN for their 2014 intake.

The player from King David Linksfeld is Aston Silver.



Clockwise:
Tyron Sussman of King David Victory Park. Tyron will also be captain of his team.

King David Victory Park’s Jake Schmidt.

Aston Silver from King David Linksfeld.

Justin Sher of King David Victory Park has been selected to the Lions Invitational President’s A team.



Chag Sameach

Wishing you a happy Passover

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