

NEXT ISSUE SEPTEMBER 13
Owing to Yomtov, on September 4, 5 and 6, our next issue will be distributed on September 13.

South African Jewish Report

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Photo: Ian Ossendryver

Warmth and congeniality

Businessman and philanthropist Eric Samson, shares a joke with Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the first-ever woman elected to the post of chairman of the African Union and Wendy Kahn, SAJBD National Director. Dr Dlamini-Zuma was guest speaker at last Sunday’s 47th biennial national conference of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg. She praised the community and its leadership for their role in the fields of job creation, education and skills development. The Eric and Sheila Samson and Mendel Kaplan Award for long-service to the community, was presented to Michael Katz and Isla Feldman, for having devoted themselves to the needs of the Jewish community over many years.

See stories on page 4, 5, 6, 12

Shanah Tovah Umetukah!
The editor and staff of the Jewish Report wish all our readers, stakeholders and advertisers a sweet and blessed New Year and well over the Fast.

‘Jewish’ concert a prickly nettle for new Wits vice-chancellor

Mary Kluk: “If it were not for the awful thuggish behaviour by those who are now being charged by the Wits administration, there would be no need for any of the security measures we are forced to pursue this time.”

3, 20



Muslim Zionist tells packed Beyachad of political conversion

Kasim Hafeez gave an entertaining account of how he had been questioned at Ben-Gurion Airport after in essence saying he had once been an anti-Semite but now was not sure and wanted to check the situation out for himself.

22

This Yomtov, spare a thought for the lonely Jewish elderly

“The harshest thing for many of them is not being able to be in a minyan for the recitation of the yizkor prayer. That is really the crux that touches everyone,” says country communities spiritual leader, Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

43

Shana Tova uMetuka

Wishing you the blessings of good health, good fortune, and happiness throughout the coming year and a meaningful fast.

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Shabbat Times

August 30 / 24 Elul		
August 31 / 25 Elul		
Parshat Nitzavim/Vayelech		
17:36	18:23	Johannesburg
18:09	19:01	Cape Town
17:22	18:12	Durban
17:41	18:32	Bloemfontein
17:40	18:32	Port Elizabeth
17:32	18:23	East London

Erev Rosh Hashanah	
Wednesday September 4 / 29 Elul Candle-lighting	
17:38	Johannesburg.
18:12	Cape Town
17:24	Durban
17:44	Bloemfontein
17:43	Port Elizabeth
17:35	East London

Thursday September 5/ 1 Tishrei 1st Day Rosh Hashanah Candle-lighting from pre existing flame	
18:28	Johannesburg
19:04	Cape Town
18:15	Durban
18:34	Bloemfontein
18:35	Port Elizabeth
18:26	East London

Parshat Ha’azinu Shabbat Shuva		
September 6 / 2 Tishrei		
September 7 / 3 Tishrei		
17:39	18:29	Johannesburg
18:14	18:06	Cape Town
17:25	18:16	Durban
17:45	18:35	Bloemfontein
17:45	18:37	Port Elizabeth
15:36	18:28	East London

Fast of Gedaliya		
Monday September 8/ 4 Tishrei		
Begins	Ends	
05:04	18:16	Johannesburg
05:42	18:51	Cape Town
04:53	18:03	Durban
05:12	18:22	Bloemfontein
05:13	18:22	Port Elizabeth
05:05	18:13	East London



Our Rosh Hashanah cover
ROBYN SASSEN

Our “cover girl” this Rosh Hashanah is well-respected Johannesburg-based fine artist Loren Hodes. Jewish Report chose to reproduce Hodes’ oil painting “The Tree of Life”, on the glossy cover of this issue because of its vibrancy and the evolved symbolism it embodies. “The tree branching outwards is a symbol of the Torah,” explains Hodes.

A covenant that defines us as a people

These final parshot of the Torah always coincide with the approaching end of the old year and the beginning of the new year. This is in line with the contents of these parshot which contain the review of Moshe’s career as the leader of Israel and of his life and its achievements.

So too does the end of the year demand of us a review, if not of our entire past life, at least a review and accounting of our actions during the past year.

Moshe’s review is really the main contents of the book of Dvarim itself. Though it recalls historical and national events, there is no doubt that Moshe himself is the central figure of the book. He records for us his personal feelings and candidly admits as to his disappointments and frustrations. But he never departs from his central mission of reminding

the people of Israel of the unbreakable covenant that has been formed between them and their Creator.

That covenant is renewed again in this week’s parsha. It is no exaggeration to assert that it is constantly renewed and at the year’s end we are reminded of this automatic renewal. That is the essential essence of remembrance that characterises this special season of the year. For remembrance brings forth judgment and accountability and leads to an eventual renewal of spirit and faith.

Moshe reminds the people that the future is also contained in their remembrance and observance of the covenant. All the generations past, present and future, are bound together in this covenant of accountability. And through this process, the mortal Moshe gains immortality, as all of us can acquire this immortality

through our loyalty to the covenant.

Moshe at the end of his life has in no way lost his acumen, strength or vision. He leaves this world in perfect health and free of bodily ailments and restraints.

Yet he tells us in this week’s parsha that he “can no longer go forth and return”. For humans exist by the will of G-d and when that will decrees the end of life, then the human being will cease to function on this earth. Who can claim greater merits in this world than Moshe had? Yet the hand of human mortality struck him down.

Part of the great lesson of Torah is that life continues without us necessarily being present. Moshe sees far into the distant future, but knows that he will not be present to see those events actually unfold. He hark-



Nitzavim Vayelech

Rabbi Berel Wein
Founder Destiny Foundation

ens back to the covenant of remembrance as being the instrument of his continuing presence throughout all of Jewish history. As long as the covenant is remembered and observed, Moshe is still present with Israel.

It is this covenant that defines us as a people and even as individuals. Our relationship to it is under constant heavenly review. It should be self-evident that for our part we should enthusiastically renew our allegiance to it at this fateful part of our life and year. Shabat shalom.

Rosh Hashanah message from Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein

Something amazing is happening in our community, something that is going to unify Jews right across the spectrum, and from all backgrounds. It’s audacious and has never been tried before. It’s so powerful and yet so simple: for the South African Jewish community to keep one Shabbos together from Friday afternoon sundown October 11 to Saturday night October 12 when the stars are out. It’s called “The Shabbos Project - Keeping it Together”.

But why Shabbos? And what’s the whole idea behind this initiative of thousands of South African Jews keeping one Shabbos together? To answer these questions we have composed The Shabbos Project Manifesto which declares:

1. Together we will keep the Shabbos of October 11/12, from sundown to stars out.
2. We will keep it in its entirety, in all of its detail and splendour as set out in The Code of Jewish Laws.
3. Its rhythm will unite us with each other, with Jews around the world and throughout the ages.
4. On this day we will create a warm and loving space, holding our families together.
5. On this day we will lay down the burdens, distractions, demands and pressures of daily life.
6. On this day we will renew ourselves, emerging spiritually, emotionally and physically invigorated.
7. On this day we will own our precious heritage, wearing it as a badge of pride and honour.
8. Together we embark on this great adventure to rediscover our G-d-given gift of Shabbos.

The Manifesto aims to give us all unity and clarity of purpose as we go forward to keep the Shabbos together.

The Shabbos Project is about “keeping it together” - not just Shabbos keeping us together, but all of us keeping it together. Because that is

the idea: all South African Jews coming together from across the spectrum - religious, secular, traditional; young and old - to keep Shabbos as a community.

There is such a wonderful energy we generate when we do things together as one united community. Families and friends sharing this experience together makes it even more special and memorable.

Imagine thousands of Jews across the country keeping the same Shabbos. Imagine the inspiration. Imagine the sense of unity. Of course, in keeping Shabbos together, we will not only be connecting with all of South African Jewry, but with Jews in every generation across every historic era since the Torah was given at Mount Sinai 3 326 years ago.

But there is another meaning to “Keeping it Together”.

Modern life has become fragmented; we are constantly pulled in different directions by distractions, demands and onerous responsibilities that pile up with increasing speed. We are now dealing with lightning-paced, ubiquitous communication channels, our attentions overwhelmed by the cacophony around us, while our lives buckle under the strain.

And it’s not just communication, but the entire set-up of our modern world. Families struggle to find time to sit down to a meal together and just talk and be together. We seldom get the chance to “be there” - all there, all at once.

Into a world of fragmentation, Shabbos enters to offer us that chance. On Shabbos, we set aside time to revisit and reinvigorate our most important relationships - with G-d, with our families, with our friends and, actually, with ourselves.



Through Shabbos, we keep it - our lives - together.

In order to make the Shabbos Project real, manageable and accessible to everybody, we have created a vast array of resources and content across a wide range of platforms to get you started.

We have written an official guide book (which will be available at your shul on Rosh Hashanah) for the why and the how of Shabbos and we have created a tool kit to accompany you through your Shabbos experience.

And then there is even the option to find a coach or a host to enhance the Shabbos experience or you can become a coach or a host for somebody else. And for any questions you may have we have set up a hot line (011) 242-5550 that you can call and get answers right away.

Go to the website TheShabbosProject.org to see all the resources and content that are available. Speak to your rabbi and your shuls all of whom have come on board as official and enthusiastic partners of the Shabbos Project and most important of all - sign up and join the Shabbos Project.

Since we launched the Shabbos Project at Sinai Indaba, so many people from across the country and all walks of life, have expressed their interest and support for this exciting project. The Shabbos Project is a unique and special opportunity for us all, let’s “Keep it Together”.

Rosh Hashanah, a time of renewal and introspection, is the perfect opportunity for us all to embrace the Shabbos Project, and in the merit of this great mitzvah may Hashem inscribe and seal us all for a shana tova umetuka - a good and sweet year!



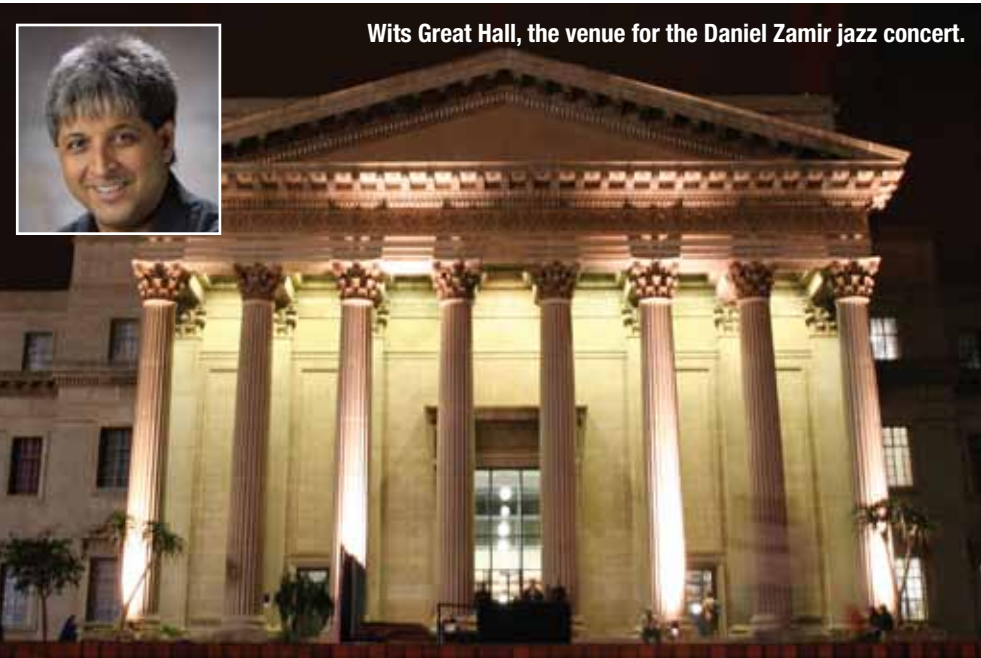
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‘Jewish’ concert a prickly nettle for new Wits vice-chancellor



Wits Great Hall, the venue for the Daniel Zamir jazz concert.

ANT KATZ

In its august history of almost 120 years, Wits has stood as a bastion of freedom of expression. All through apartheid-ridden South Africa and the 20-odd years of a free and democratic South Africa, Wits has always stood its ground as a fiercely free academic institution.

Today, as the Jewish Report goes to print, this pillar of freedom of expression in South Africa faces arguably its toughest test ever. And, given the stakes, neither side is prepared to blink.

The battle for the soul of Wits has, at its heart, the right of Israelis to perform in its Great Hall.

And the players are strange bed-fellows: the campus anti-Israel lobby is led by a Jew, while the new administration which is not prepared to accept hooliganism or the exclusion of Israeli culture from Wits, is led by Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib (inset), a Muslim.

Now, after a series of interviews, the Jewish Report can tell readers the full story - out of the mouths of SAJBD National Chairman Mary Kluk and President Zev Krengel; Wits Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib; BDS’ Muhammed Desai; Wits PSC’s Alex Freeman; and the SAZF National Chairman Avrom Krengel and Cape Chairman Ben Levitas.

The issue relates to a concert by Israeli-born musician, Yossi Reshef in March, that was abandoned after 15 minutes due to the hooliganism of protesting students. Eleven Wits students (nine of whom are SRC members), were subsequently charged by Wits for contravention of the university’s codes of conduct. The hearings are still proceeding.

After the abandonment of the Reshef concert, the embarrassed University’s Vice-Chancellor’s Office (at that time represented by incumbent but outgoing Professor Loyiso Nongxa), in

consultation with incoming Professor Habib, quickly decided to ask the Wits music department to arrange to re-host the concert.

“They told us it would not be possible due to (Reshef’s) diary,” Habib told the Jewish Report on Tuesday. The music department suggested hosting another Israeli artist, which was agreed by the VC’s office.

On August 7, the SA Zionist Federation announced that a concert by Daniel Zamir Israeli jazz quartet, would take place in the Wits Great Hall on August 28. Since then, antagonists have tried to force Habib to back down.

Krengel “applauded Wits University for upholding the democratic values and freedoms that have made it so fine an academic institution and for its forthright rejection of the intimidatory, bullying tactics of those who do not scruple to undermine those freedoms in order to push their own radical political agendas.”

Outfoxed by Jewish organisations

The anti-Israel lobby became incensed when they tried to buy tickets to attend the concert, planning to gain access and protest from within the hall - as they had done at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City on Yom Ha’atzmaut - only to find that Jewish communal organisations had purchased almost all of the tickets and were doing background checks on all prospective buyers.

The dispute between Wits management and its anti-Israel students came to a head this week after Habib stood his ground and the Wits Uni-

versity Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC), represented by Jewish student Alex Freeman, and Boycott, Divest and Sanctions SA (BDS), represented by Desai, realised that Wits would not cancel the concert.

Habib said he would not give in to the demands and that the concert would go on as

planned.

In an attempt to discredit the performance, the PSC and BDS held a news conference on Monday afternoon and released audio recordings which they claimed was “evidence of racial profiling and background-checking practised by pro-Israeli organisations in SA”, said BDS’ Desai.

To page 20

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Community, govt leaders meet for the SAJBD’s 47th biennial national conference and banquet

SHIRA DRUION

The South African Board Jewish Board of Deputies’ daylong conference and gala banquet on Sunday, made for stimulating debate and interaction.

A top-notch group of guest speakers and panellists, lent lustre to the event at the Sandton Sun Hotel and bore testimony to

the pivotal role fulfilled by the SAJBD in the everyday lives of the local Jewish community.

The Board, under the leadership of Chairman Mary Kluk, its president, Zev Kren-gel and Executive Director Wendy Kahn, worked tirelessly to build with government, local high calibre institutions of impor-tance, as well as international Jewish



Zev Krenkel, President of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies; Jeff Radebe Minister of Justice; and Tony Leon former DA leader and SA Ambassador to Argentina.

organisations with whom they share com-mon ground, namely the welfare of the Jewish community.

The topic of the opening panel was “Creating Open Spaces in South Africa” and was chaired by former DA leader and SA ambassador to Argentina, Tony Leon. The session was a hard-hitting ping-pong match of provocative questioning posed from the audience to Joan Fubbs, ANC MP, Kluk and Wits Deputy Vice-Chancellor Rob Moore who was grilled on the Yossi Reshef concert issue that thrust Wits into the political limelight for the wrong reasons.

Fubbs answered questions on govern-ment policy in her capacity as chairman of the Parliamentary Portfolio of Trade and Industry, ensuring the audience that government would not sit by idly when safe spaces for dialogue were being compro-mised.

The second session, chaired by Stephen Grootes, was titled, “Imagine a World Without Hate”. Panellists were Minister of Justice Jeff Radebe; Michael Whine, an authority on combatting hate crimes in the UK and EU; Mervyn Smith, a prominent board member who has fought against hate speech in South Africa, as in the cases of Deputy Minister Marius Fransman and the BDS, labelling issues. The other panellist was Gauteng Council Chairman Jeff Katz.

The highlight of the punchy presenta-tion was Minister Radebe’s rendition of John Lennon’s famous song, “Imagine”. Radebe praised the Jewish community for its inextricable involvement in the fabric of anti-apartheid activism in South Africa and to the delight of the audience, he sang the words of Lennon’s song in the hope of being able to realise the dream of living in a world that is governed by peace.

The gala banquet boasted a prominent guest list of dignitaries including newly-appointed Israeli Ambassador Arthur Lenk; African Union supremo Nkosazana Dlamini- Zuma; Western Cape Premier Helen Zille; and Minister of Home Affairs, Naledi Pandor; Governor of the Reserve Bank Gill Marcus, and many more.

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From page 4

Dlamini-Zuma congratulated the Board and the community at large for the role they have continued to play in the fields of job creation, education and skills development in striving to create a brighter future for South Africans across the spectrum.

SAZF Chairman Avrom Krengel said: “Our future is so much brighter than our past, and we will continue to lead with dignity, passion and dedication to this community, to the Republic of South Africa and to the State of Israel.”

The Eric and Sheila Samson and Mendel Kaplan Award for long service to the community was presented to Michael Katz and Isla Feldman, both of whom have devoted themselves to the needs of the South African Jewish community for many decades.

Seasoned journalist Benjamin Pogrund, who made aliyah many years ago, was honoured with the SAJBD Humanitarian Award for the role he played during apartheid as a journalist in his pursuit of justice as he

championed the cause in the fight to create democracy and equality for all.

SAJBD head of marketing Charisse Zeiffert, described him as “a man who is powerful, principled and who worked tirelessly to expose and denounce the atrocities of apartheid to the world.”

In his address, Pogrund spoke about pessimism on the current round of Israeli–Palestinian peace talks. There is no trust between the sides, he said. One thing which happened in SA during the Struggle, was that when the ANC decided to embark on its “armed struggle”, it took a clear decision not to target whites, allowing a degree of trust to prevail between the sides.


He also spoke about journalism, paying tribute to two editors, Laurence Gandar and Raymond Louw, who during apartheid had significantly affected how news got out, despite government’s attempts to silence it. “Journalists need to be angry,” he said, “angry to tell the stories that need to be told.”

Benjamin Pogrund



Panel discussion





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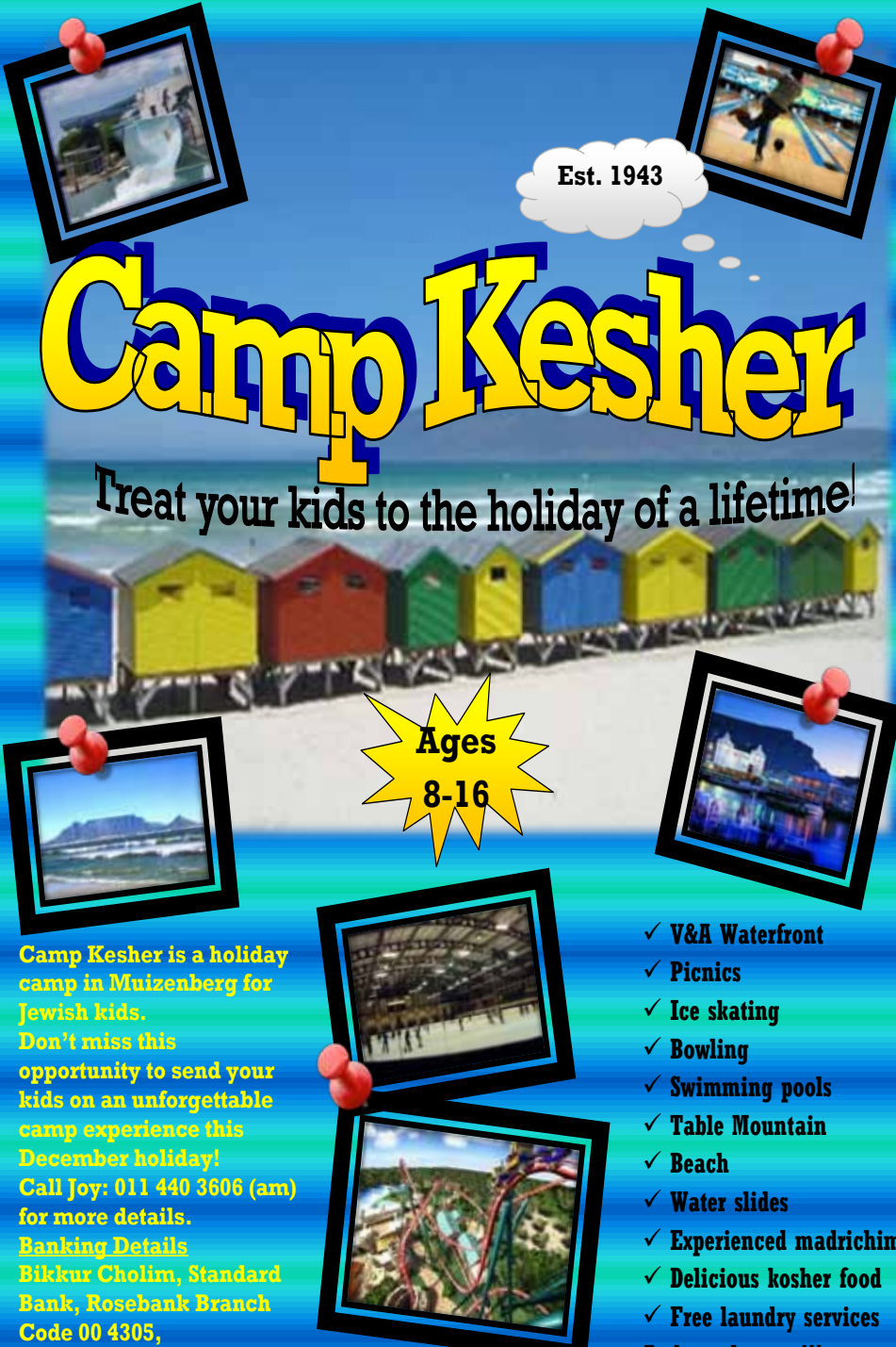
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south african

Jewish Report

African challenges and visions

South Africa’s turbulent history has always pressed people, including Jews, to take a stand on political and social issues. One could not live under apartheid without having a view on it, whether positive or negative.

In facing today’s challenges, are we South African first, or Jewish first? And who may speak on behalf of the Jew to government or non-Jewish society?

The SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) has positioned itself for decades as the most representative secular body. Not everyone goes along with this. There are always questions about its legitimacy, politics, religious affiliations, etc.

The relationship between our South African and Jewish identities crops up. And our strong identification with Israel adds spice to the mix.

The SAJBD’s biennial conference on Sunday, reflected these issues without providing glib answers. The attendance of a wide range of delegates, both Jewish and non-Jewish, indicated that it is taken seriously by a significant swathe of people, even though some Jews reject it as their public voice.

There are those who want a more vociferous response from the Board, especially on issues affecting Israel, while the Board’s “quiet diplomacy” of “slowly slowly catchy monkey” seems to be working if one looks at the presence of prominent black political figures at the very successful conference.

We live in a fluid society which, since our transition from the brutality of apartheid to democracy 19 years ago, has yet to find its true identity and become comfortable with itself. Minority groups like Jews are not yet sure of their place in it, notwithstanding involvement in broader society on numerous levels.

It was encouraging how much effort went into ensuring the conference, which also celebrated 110 years since the board’s founding in 1903, had a strongly South African flavour, in addition to its Jewish one.

Strong connections with government were evident, illustrated by the calibre of guests and speakers, including ministers. Music was provided by Buskaid, black youngsters playing violins and cellos in beautiful renditions of South Africa’s and Israel’s national anthems. Other touches included booklets documenting Jewish activities in welfare and community development in broader society.

There was delight when keynote speaker, African Union Chairman Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, clad in her vibrant African dress, laughed defiantly after making a political faux pas by mistakenly referring to DA leader Helen Zille as “Gauteng Premier”.

Justice Minister Jeff Radebe told the audience that the ANC believed in a two-state solution in the Middle East and was promoting new legislation against hate speech. However, he unfortunately evaded a question from the floor on why government doesn’t censure its office-bearers who make public statements contrary to the spirit of this policy.

Shortly after the Anglo-Boer War, the SAJBD’s founders couldn’t have predicted that the 20th century would produce two world wars, the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel and a non-racial, democratic South Africa brought into being with the help of leaders like Nelson Mandela.

One speaker noted that this conference coincided with the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech, envisaging a time when “people will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character”. It also coincided with Women’s Month, advocating a world where women’s energy and talents were recognised and welcomed in society on an equal basis.

We don’t know what the 21st century will bring for our complicated country and increasingly complicated world. There will always be people like Bongani Masuku, who issue statements like his call to South Africans to make the lives of Israeli supporters “hell”, and stations like Radio 786, which give platforms to Holocaust-deniers. And in the Internet era, the propagation of hate speech - including the alarming growth of anti-Semitism - has a new and powerful medium.

What is clear is that these issues will continue to manifest and Jewish organisations must provide vital platforms for debate and action. Dlamini-Zuma invited South African Jewry to contribute to creating a vision for Africa for the year 2063. “I will be knocking on your door at the beginning of November for your contributions,” she said. Jews need to make their input to such a vision.

Justice Minister Radebe promises stricter laws on hate crimes

DAVID SAKS

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development Jeff Radebe (pictured), assured delegates to the SAJBD’s 47th national conference in Johannesburg last Sunday, that his government recognised that hate crimes constituted a particular category of offence and that this needed to be reflected in the way they were dealt with by the courts.

Currently, South African law did not specifically recognise a category of crimes committed on the basis of the victim’s “inherent characteristics or membership of a particular group”, nor did it expressly allow for such aggravating circumstances to be considered when sentence was imposed.

For this reason, his department had recently prepared a draft “Policy Framework on Combating Hate Crimes, Hate Speech and Unfair Discrimination”, which would shortly be presented before Parliament.

This was inter alia intended as introducing “a further category of newly-defined hate crimes in instances where the conduct would otherwise constitute an offence recognised at common law or by statute, and where there is evidence of a discriminatory motive on the basis of characteristics such as race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation and the like”.

Radebe was one of the panellists speaking in the conference session entitled “Imagine a World Without Hate”. In the course of his presentation, he showed himself to be well versed in the history of how Jews, both in South Africa and globally, had been the victims of prejudice.

In South Africa, this had led to, among other things, the passage of the Quota Act of 1930 and the Aliens Act of 1937, whose aim was to prevent Jews from



immigrating to South Africa and further precluded them from holding certain professional positions in the civil service.

While South Africa had made significant strides in eradicating formal inequalities and establishing robust democratic institutions, Radebe acknowledged that hate crimes were nevertheless committed periodically by “some few who refuse to embrace the changing times heralded by our Constitutional order”.

Examples included the violent targeting of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people; the wave of xenophobic attacks against foreign migrants in May 2008; the case of the “Reitz Four” at Free State University; and vandalism targeting religious institutions such as the defacing of tombstones in the Bloemfontein Jewish Cemetery with anti-Semitic graffiti in 2010.

South African law needed to recognise hate crimes based on the individual’s inherent characteristics or membership of a particular group, because, Radebe believed, these were “message” crimes that sent fear to an entire community that identified with the victim.

“As such, hate crimes, particularly when they do not meet an adequate response from the State, violate fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination and can lead to social unrest,” he said.

Radebe clarified that the Policy Framework would introduce the concept of hate crime to South African criminal law and make hate speech a crime while at the same time refining the concept of hate speech in a way that reflected the constitutional right to freedom of expression.

Joan Fubbs on ensuring ‘free spaces’ for expression in Parliament

DAVID SAKS

How to ensure free spaces for expression in Parliament, was a question addressed by Joanmarie Fubbs (pictured), chairman of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry, in the first session of the SAJBD’s national conference last Sunday.

Not only did this mean allowing for engagement without intimidation, she said, but it entailed fostering a culture of participatory democracy in which the public could be active champions of their own destiny. Quoting Former Constitutional Court Justice Albie Sachs, she pointed out that lawmaking had its roots in policy, and hence when drawing up such policy, lawmakers needed to engage with the public.

This meant ensuring that there were effective mechanisms for the public, including civil society, to have meaningful input into any aspect of public policy that concerned it.

Chapter Five of the Constitution underpinned the participatory process. In addition to allowing for different lobbies to make submissions on envisaged new legislation to the various Parliamentary portfolio committees, it also envisaged a petition process. This, Fubbs pointed out, could indeed take the form of an actual petition with multiple signatories, but it could also simply take the form of a letter or a phone call to an MP.

An effective process of consultation and participation sowed the seeds of social cohesion, Fubbs asserted.

If, by contrast, people felt disengaged, it bred fearfulness and created an environment for intimidation to take root. Fubbs said it was not enough for different views to simply be heard - they had to be listened to as well, which was not the same thing.

Dialogue, when properly conducted, was a dynamic process.



Engaging with different viewpoints in turn led to one’s own position being subject to re-examination, and ultimately this willingness by all engaged in the process, to give and take as called for allowed for a workable consensus to emerge.

All of this was especially important in a society in transition, as South Africa still was. As a historical example of successfully bringing the public on board, Fubbs spoke about how the famous Freedom Charter of 1955, had come into being.

There, the input of all South Africans was canvassed, and based on what was received, a set of bedrock principles for a just new society was drawn up, which today enjoyed almost across the board acceptance in the country’s political culture.

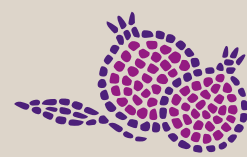


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In Israel's case 'verdict first, trial afterwards' principle prevails



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

Horrific as the recent carnage in the Middle East has been, it has taken the pressure off Israel. Even in a largely sympathetic environment like SA, those bent on portraying it as a monstrous rogue state that is at the epicentre of instability in the region, can hardly make their case when in Egypt and Syria well over 1 000 civilians have been massacred.

In Iraq, the death toll through countless terrorist attacks has reached the same proportions. Since the uprising against the Assad regime in Syria turned lethal about two years ago, it has in fact become increasingly difficult for local activists to whip up the usual mass outrage over the fact that some Palestinians are being inconvenienced at checkpoints.

What the Syrian and Egyptian regimes are now doing to their own people is exactly what Israel was falsely accused of doing to the Palestinians during the "Second Intifada" and the subsequent reprisal attacks on Gaza.

With the introduction of chemical weapons against a civilian population, the international community, for the time being at least, has departed from its usual laissez faire attitude to the civil war in Syria, to start calling for official probes into the atrocity.

What is interesting to note, is that much of the discourse on the subject is couched in terms of "alleged" or "apparent" nerve gas attacks, with serious consideration being given to the possibility that the evidence might have been forged by the anti-Assad forces.

Thus, even after more than 100 000 confirmed deaths, which have demonstrated that the Assad regime has had little scruple about killing off large numbers of its own citizens to remain in power, the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" to some extent applies.

Compare this to how readily the most lurid atrocity stories against Israel are given credence, even though time and again evidence has emerged to thoroughly discredit them.

Not only has it regularly emerged that Palestinian casualty figures have been ludicrously inflated - the 5 000+ deaths in the "Jenin Massacre" of 2002, as the most striking example, turned out to be just 52, the majority of them combatants - but it has been repeatedly revealed after the fact that the Palestinians have brazenly fabricated evidence of atrocities.

The stage-managed Mohammed al-Dura shooting at the commencement of the post-Oslo terrorist war launched by Yasser Arafat,

should alone have resulted in the world media's treating all subsequent Palestinian claims with due caution.

Innumerable hoaxes have been perpetrated since then, including staged funerals in which the "corpses", after the video cameras have done their work, have climbed off their biers and walked jauntily away. Despite this, when it comes to Israel, it has to date been a case of "guilty until proven guilty", with Israel still to be considered guilty, even when the evidence has conclusively demonstrated the contrary.

The UN Human Right's Council's Goldstone Commission, instituted in the wake of the 2008-9 Gaza incursion, was the most egregious instance of the "verdict first, trial afterwards" principle that has consistently been applied when it comes to Israel.

For all this, the war against Israel in the media, NGO and legal spheres, has abated somewhat. This is in large part due to there now being far more pressing areas of concern in the Middle East, while the relatively peaceful conditions in the West Bank over the past half-decade or so has also helped a great deal.

This should be regarded as no more than a breathing space, however. What should be clear by now is that the global campaign to turn Israel into a pariah state is not driven by any feelings of concern for Palestinian well-being; on the contrary, the peaceful co-existence of the Israeli and Palestinian people is the last thing they want.

Rather, it is opposition to the existence of a Jewish-majority state anywhere in the Middle East that drives them; for that it is necessary for the Palestinians to be suffering.

Logically, if people you care about are acting in a way that will inevitably have negative consequences, you urge them to desist.

Were Jews to routinely provoke their neighbours with unprovoked terrorist attacks, including on their civilian population, the rest of the Jewish world would implore them not to do so, especially in cases where those attacked were in a position to powerfully retaliate.

By contrast, nothing is said by those purporting to care about the Palestinians against continual acts of lethal provocation such as cross-border missile fire from Gaza.

It is only when Israel retaliates that the activists emerge in all their hissing fury. It is just further proof that the moral outrage purportedly generated by Israeli actions is in reality an ugly fraud. Now that peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians (at least those living in the West Bank) are underway once more, it would be wise for the Israelis to convey to their counterparts how little, if at all, those who are so noisily campaign on their behalf actually have their interests at heart.

3

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Hearing the shofar’s call

YAAKOV ASTOR

The shofar has an aura of awe and holiness. Its blast can shatter hearts of stone and wash away layers of complacency. Its call is capable of bringing us back to places inside ourselves impenetrable by any other means. The Baal Shem Tov said: “In the palace of the king there are many chambers and each one needs a different key. There is one key, one instrument, however, which can open all the doors - the axe. The shofar is an axe. When a person passionately breaks his heart before the A-mighty, he can smash any gate in the palace of the King of Kings.”

The Baal Shem Tov is teaching that the shofar is an emotional, intuitive way of gaining access to the deepest recesses of our heart, of divine experiential knowledge. King David, on the other hand, seems to contradict this. In reference to the shofar he says: “Happy is the people who know the tru’ah [ie the shofar blast]” (Psalms 89:16). He does not say: “Happy is the people who hear the tru’ah.” The emphasis seems to be on intellectualisation. Accordingly, we would need to use our intellects with great effort if we truly wanted to benefit from the shofar. Which is it? Is shofar an emotional, intuitive experience, as the Baal Shem Tov suggests, or is it an intellectual one, as the words of King David imply?

The Magic Bell
The Dubno Maggid offers a parable that can perhaps help answer this question. A poor farmer had a wealthy uncle who lived in the city and who once invited him for a visit. Thrilled with the invitation the farmer wasted no time setting out for his rich uncle’s home. When he arrived he was greeted warmly and led immediately into a large dining hall with a long table. As they spoke and shared stories about family, the uncle picked up a brass bell and clanged it. Immediately, a troop of servants emerged from side doors with trays of appetisers. The farmer had never seen such enticing food in his life. The servants returned to the kitchen quarters and the two relatives continued the conversation. Shortly thereafter, the uncle clanged the bell again and the servants reappeared, taking away the old trays and bringing out new ones with the first course. The farmer’s eyes bulged. He had never seen such enormous quantities of food and such dedicated service. This pattern continued throughout the evening. Each time the uncle rang the bell an entourage of servants answered his call, removing the old food and replacing it with the new. And with each clang the poor farmer was more dumbstruck. When it was time to leave, the farmer thanked his uncle heartily and

made a stop at a local store before rushing home. When he arrived he woke up his wife and excitedly told her. “You’ll never believe what I did?” “What?” “I spent our last penny!” “You what!?” “Don’t worry. I spent it on something you will thank me a million times for buying. Here, look.” And he took out of his pouch a brass bell just like his uncle’s. “This,” the farmer said, “is a magic bell.” His wife looked at him as if he was crazy. Undaunted, the man said, “You’ll see, all I have to do is ring it and, immediately, servants will come out and serve us the most exquisite food which we can eat till our hearts content.” Of course, the servants didn’t appear. The bell possessed no magic. It only worked when used as a signal to servants already waiting in the wings. So, too, the shofar. If, beforehand, we have no reservoir of response waiting in the wings, then the shofar has as much ability to move us as that farmer’s “magic” bell. For it to work we need to prepare. This is what King David meant when he emphasised the importance of “knowing” the tru’ah. We have to work on ourselves prior, inducing the proper frame of mind, for the shofar to really take effect. And this, indeed, is why we blow the shofar every weekday morning during the Hebrew month of Elul until



the day before Rosh Hashanah: to sensitise ourselves to its message. **The Hidden Message** What is that message? Maimonides explains: “There is a hidden message we are supposed to infer by listening to the shofar. It suggests to say: ‘Sleeping ones! Awaken from your sleep! Slumbering ones! Awaken from your slumber! Examine your deeds. Remember your Creator and do teshuva...’” The call of the shofar is the call to teshuva. Teshuva, often poorly translated as “repentance,” literally means “return”, and refers to “returning” to the path of ethics and spirituality outlined in the Torah. Maimonides, however, isn’t just proposing that the shofar beckons us to undertake an external teshuva. It is a teshuva that leads us to “remember our Creator”. Sometimes we can do teshuva on particular wrongdoings and not really get to the root of the problem. As long as we attend only the symptoms but neglect the central cause, we will continually find ourselves fixing secondary problems. The shofar reminds us to address the core: to remember our Creator. Every failing is ultimately a type of forgetting that we live in the presence of G-d. Doing teshuva means getting to the root of the problem and deepening our awareness of G-d. • *Reproduced by kind permission of Aish Hatorah.*

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10 SA JEWISH REPORT

Letters

30 August – 13 September 2013

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‘ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT’ ONLY IN MINDS OF PEOPLE IGNORANT OF HISTORY

Kol Hakavod to Gideon Kaufman for his reply to Ran Greenstein (“Greenstein seems to be very selective regarding historic facts”, SAJR August 23.)

Greenstein and friends are very “green” in their knowledge of Middle East history, particularly about the so-called Arab-Israeli conflict. In truth, the only conflict there is, is in the minds of people ignorant of history, who swallow Arab propaganda line, hook and sinker!

Eretz Israel from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River is historically and biblically Jewish land, recognised as such by the 1917 Balfour Declaration; the 1920 Resolution of the victorious First World War Allied Powers at San Remo, Italy; the 1921 International Boundary Conference in Paris; Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant and the Mandate for Palestine entrusted to the British by the League.

Arab propaganda must be exposed for the big lie that it is. There never was in all of recorded history, an Arab state called “Palestine”.

The Arabs, including the fake “Palestinians”, continue their incitement against Israel in their schools, in their mosques and in their official media. Israel does not exist on their maps and according to their beliefs, namely that “Palestine” is Arab from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. This is precisely the area of Israel!

And, Ran Greenstein, there is no “occupied territory”. If anything, Israel re-conquered the eastern part of Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria in 1967, after the Jordanians illegally occupied these territories in 1948.

**Bennie Katzman
Israel**

MANY ROUTES TO A MORE EQUITABLE WORLD HAVE BEEN TRIED

Yossi Bogacz in a letter to Jewish Report of August 16, implies that we should sideline G-d and he continues: “Let’s see what we can do ourselves.”

Many routes to a more equitable world have been tried.

The Romans “civilised” the world by military conquest and then faded away; Roman Catholicism came and went in Western Europe; Communism was once accepted by more than half the world; Nazism based on race (not religions) thought the world would be a better place if ruled by Aryans and the elimination of Jews, whether the Jews were practising ones or not; presently the attempted introduction of democracy is causing havoc in many countries.

There is a movement towards humanism in the West, but this can readily be perverted by governments pandering to voters’

populist demands, by the power of capital ism (such as promoting gambling, liquor or smoking); by the whims of newspaper editors or the whims of TV station producers. All the above can be a force for good, but likewise a force for bad.

Judaism came and almost went on numerous occasions: with Hellenisation; with the Roman expulsion from our homeland, leading to further expulsions, such as Spain and England; with the Enlightenment (Haskallah) leading to crippling assimilation, especially in the US; by the collapse of European values through Nazism; and now the inability of Israel’s neighbours to negotiate a settlement and in some cases not even recognising Israel.

**John Brenner
Johannesburg**

TRIBUTE TO UNSUNG HEROES ASSISTING WITH FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

In your issue of August 2, Michael Sieff of the Chevrah Kadisha, in his column, highlighted areas that are often missed, or sad to say, naively ignored.

We have been part of the “death care industry” for more than six decades (through the manufacture of memorial stones) and working with the unsung heroes who daily have to deal with families, at possibly the worst time of their lives, bears not only mention, but appreciation.

The article highlighted quite correctly, the almost daily situation at West Park Cemetery regarding funeral arrangements and the support structure. However, may I take this opportunity to commend those who, in smaller communities, voluntarily and, yes at almost a drop of a hat, make themselves available to assist where there has been a death in their community.

Reality is that these ones are getting less and less as the communities get older and due to circumstances, dwindle. Yet, when you get there, they have arranged the funeral, seen to all that is required and staunchly supported their fellow members in the Jewish community, no matter how small.

They do not have the infrastructure or support of the bigger organisations who so readily come to their aid. My admiration goes out to all of them.

Although generally our service in supplying the metsavah comes later, on arriving we always get someone locally who meets us and assists (in many cases with a cup of tea and biscuits).

My appeal is: Do not take them for granted, but express your appreciation in word, deed and support.

**Collen Hawley
Johannesburg**

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ZAMIR CONCERT AT WITS: BDS/MRN SLIP IS SHOWING

Crying wolf and then claiming victimisation, is a typical tactic employed by the anti-Israel crowd to falsely peddle support for their agenda.

The latest incident is construed by BDS South Africa and Media Review Network (MRN) regarding a music concert to be held at Wits University.

In March these two groups, along with university students and the Wits SRC, violently disrupted a Yossi Reshef concert. Having taken the matter very seriously, Wits, the bastion of democracy and free speech in South Africa, is currently holding the students accountable for misconduct at a disciplinary hearing whose outcome has yet to be determined.

In the interim, on Wednesday August 28, Wits has permitted Israeli artist Daniel Zamir to perform on campus, in an effort to continue to uphold its values of diversity, pluralism and democracy.

In a pathetic effort to cry victimisation, BDS SA and MRN, called for a press conference to expose recordings of “racial ethnic profiling” by official Jewish organisations in South Africa.

By overlooking additional threats of premeditated violence, even by members of the same SRC for the upcoming concert, BDS and MRN are crying “wolf”, again.

Attendees at the previous concert were not screened and as a result, violent abusive elements disrupted the concert from within.

In an effort to have the current concert run its course without incident, potential troublemakers are being justifiably ousted and prevented from attending.

This is an unfortunate consequence and a lesson learned from BDS’s and MRN’s previous violence and public calls by their supporters for additional violence.

If BDS and MRN are so saddened that they may not be able to attend the current concert, they are most welcome to purchase Zamir’s concert and other recordings online.

Crying “racial profiling” to a handful of journalists, is a transparent, hypocritical tactic intended to not only to slap Wits’ efforts for due process, but also an insult to the public at large.

There is simply no wolf since BDS/MRN supporters have no interest whatsoever in Israeli/Jewish music.

Their only wish is to portray victimisation for being prevented from targeting violence at an Israeli and his probable predominately Jewish audience.

Uri Barak of Spotlighting
spotlighting@outlook.com

KAUFMAN GETS MANY FACTS WRONG

Gideon Kaufman’s letter in the Jewish Report of August 23, brings with it a strong sense of déjà vu. Where did we hear talk about illegal squatters and ungrateful natives defying the wishes of a benevolent government to modernise them and improve their lot in life? Where did we hear about the natives being ruled by their own government?

Almost to the letter, Kaufman replicates the rhetoric of the apartheid government with its “betterment schemes” and “homelands”, in which indigenous people were supposed to exercise their right to self-determination.

In doing that he gets many of his facts wrong. Let me mention only two of them: First, it was not the Ottoman government in the 1850s but the Israeli government in the 1950s that expelled

tens of thousands of Bedouins from the country, confiscated large parts of their land, concentrated the remaining population within an arid area called the Siyag, and denied them access to the rest of their land.

Decades later, their inability to maintain residence on the land from which they had been removed, served the courts in approving new government plans. These plans were adopted against the wishes of the stakeholders - the Bedouins themselves. They are meant to allow new rural and urban settlement open to Jews only, excluding the original landowners. Sounds familiar?

Second, Kaufman’s notion that Palestinians in the territories are not occupied because they can vote for their own government is laughable. That government has no power over essential services: security, land, water, roads, housing,

trade. These are controlled by the Israeli military authorities, who run an inaccessible permit system meant to keep Palestinian in conditions of subordination and dependence, and benefit Israeli settlers and companies.

Local people have no say in these matters. Their “own” government has less power than a local municipality in South Africa.

Condemning these oppressive Israeli practices has nothing to do with the religious or ethnic affiliation of the officials formulating and implementing government policies. It has everything to do with universal human rights, which must apply equally to Jews and Arabs in the country they share.

Ran Greenstein
University of the Witwatersrand

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Dwindling numbers, but African Jewish Congress holds its own



Newly-elected African Jewish Congress Vice-President Geoff Ramokgadi; Mervyn Smith (president); Israeli Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk; and AJC Spiritual Leader Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

DAVID SAKS

Immediately after the SAJBD national congress on Sunday, representatives of six African countries came together at the same venue for the 15th conference of the African Jewish Congress (AJC).

The countries represented were South Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland, Mauritius, Lesotho and Botswana. Because of ill-health, Zimbabwe's representative, Sam Benatar, could not attend. A special AJC Distinguished Service award was bestowed on him in his absence by the AJC's spiritual leader and CEO Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

The main theme of the discussion was how the local Jewish communities should respond to negative behaviour on the part of Israelis based in their respective countries. This became an issue during the recent Zimbabwe election, in which much hostile attention was focused on the Israeli PR company Nikuv for the part it

played in running the ruling Zanu-PF's election campaign. Newly-arrived Israel Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk, whose brief also includes Mauritius, Lesotho and Swaziland, participated in the discussion and pledged his assistance should future such issues arise. Ann Harris, widow of the late former Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, reported on the building of a Holocaust museum in Mauritius, where over 1 500 Jewish refugees from Europe were interned by the British government during the war, after being turned away from Palestine. Tribute was paid to the late Harold Pupkewitz, a founding member and vice-president of the AJC, who passed away in Namibia last year at the age of 96. Swaziland's Jeff Ramokgadi was elected to replace him as vice-president.

The other vice-presidents are Richard Lyons (Botswana); Ann Harris and Sam Benatar (Zimbabwe); Mervyn Smith (Cape Town) was re-elected as AJC president.

JNF, BDS storm in an e-mail cup

ANT KATZ

The Jewish National Fund-SA (JNF) thought they had been the target of the pro-Palestinian Boycott Divest & Sanction SA (BDS) group this week when they identified what they thought were BDS e-mails going to the JNF's database.

Amber Cummins, JNF's administrative director, sent out thousands of e-mails on Monday morning warning their database that BDS might have "hijacked our e-mail address" and might be "sending messages from their database that appear to come from jnf@beyachad.co.za."

This was a complete mystery to BDS head, Muhammed Desai, who addressed an e-mail to the JNF shortly thereafter, stating quite categorically that BDS had "not been party to

this hijacking". Desai added: "If any proof can be brought to us we will immediately investigate; until there is any proof, kindly refrain from associating us with the allegation that your e-mail address has been hijacked."

Cummins told the Jewish Report on Monday that after the JNF e-mail had been sent out, "we have had a lot of people enquiring as to who, or what, BDS in fact is." This, she felt, was indicative of the fact that Israel supporters were unaffected by the BDS movement's activities.

"There has been no proof sent to us (that we have 'hijacked' the e-mail of JNF)," Desai told the Jewish Report. "Neither have we received any letter or communication from the JNF."

Cummins said the JNF was not certain what had happened: "We are investigating further," she said.



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Pandor guest speaker at event honouring terrorist Leila Khaled



Minister of Home Affairs Naledi Pandor, at last weekend’s SAJBD conference with Board Chairman Mary Kluk, left, and National Executive Director Wendy Kahn.

ANT KATZ

Minister of Home Affairs Naledi Pandor, has raised the ire of some among the SA Jewish community, for agreeing to be the guest speaker at a “Palestine event and film screening of Leila Khaled”, on Thursday August 29, according to a media release issued by the BDS this week.

The Boycott, Divest and Sanction SA campaign says the Pretoria event is being held to celebrate “women heroes of the anti-apartheid struggle and women of the Palestinian struggle against Israeli apartheid”.

Palestinian Leila Khaled’s image flashed across the world after she made history in 1969 by becoming the first woman to hijack a passenger jet. Pundits say that by Pandor speaking at the event, she is going against the spirit of what Justice Minister Jeff Radebe had said at the SAJBD’s

biennial conference last weekend – see page 8.

“I feel there is a disconnect between what government ministers say to the (Jewish) community and what they say to the Muslim community,” Cape Zionist Federation Chairman Ben Levitas commented to the Jewish Report.

Levitas had been a guest at the SAJBD conference and was encouraged by Radebe’s speech. But, he said, “it is time that the government comes out and states their position (on Israel) emphatically”.

“As long as there is an open sanction from above,” Levitas told Jewish Report, “we are going to see the likes of Deputy Minister Marius Fransman and BDS, being encouraged.”

By allowing anti-Israel statements to go unchallenged, says Levitas, government is “giving the impression that there is buy-in from the top”.

Karabus legal fees: JR fundraiser kicks off

ANT KATZ

Jane Raphaely and the Jewish Report have joined forces in a campaign to try and assist Professor Cyril Karabus to repay the R400 000 he still owes for legal fees in Abu Dhabi during his nine-month incarceration in the UAE. Help Raphaely and Jewish Report to give Cyril and Jen Karabas a Yomtov gift to remember.

Karabus and his wife, Jen, were guests of honour at the Jewish Achiever Awards in Johannesburg on August 15 and shared a table with Lifetime Achievement awardee Jane Raphaely.

Karabus is “the most humble hero I had ever met in my life”, Raphaely told the Jewish Report. In association with Karabus’ lawyer Michael Bagraim and the Jewish Report, Raphaely decided that “if I could find 400 people who would be willing to join me in donating R1000 each, the problem would be solved”.

Raphaely says she couldn’t resist thinking: “What can I do to help?” She decided to spearhead a fundraising project to collect the R400 000 the Karabus family still need to settle loans from family and friends to pay for the professor’s Abu Dhabi legal expenses.

“I thought maybe the way to get it is to spread it,” Raphaely told the Jewish Report. “Let’s try and make it affordable - I don’t think it matters how much people can contribute, just that they do contribute something. As long as they think of it as giving something back to the community,” she said.

Every spare R10, R100, R1 000 or more, will help to raise the R400 000 needed.

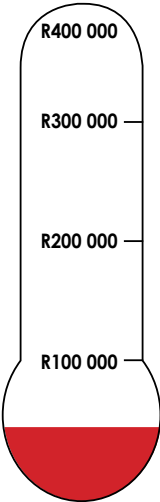
“This amount (R400 000) only covers Cyril’s Abu Dhabi expenses,” Bagraim told Jewish Report. “All local legal fees were pro amico.”

Most of the money had been loaned to settle the lawyers, says Bagraim, but the Karabus-es now owe friends and family the money.

* Banking details for donations: Bagraims Attorneys Trust Account, Absa, Heeren-gracht Branch (Code: 506 009), Account: 407-103-4654. “Please ask donors to put their own name and ‘Karabus’ as a reference so that we are able to pick up the deposits,” says Bagraim.

The Jewish Report will update readers weekly on the status of the fund.

“The fund has brought in over R30 000 in its first week,” Bagraim told Jewish Report on Tuesday. “Most of it was from Jewish Report readers.”



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Darren Sevitz, CEO of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, discusses with SHIRA DRUION how information on kashrut is being made available via social media and other instant methods. All one needs is to connect to uos.co.za/mobi, or to log on to the UOS Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groupskashrutsa/>

What do you offer the community through social media for obtaining kashrut advice?

We have embraced a modern approach to technology, harnessing the power of the Internet and social media to talk to our community, one-on-one and in real time. Our Facebook Group, “Kashrut SA” and Twitter account “@UOSofSA” does just that. These mediums have enabled us to engage with our community on matters of communal importance and relevance.

Why is this necessary and what feedback have you received from community members?

Statistics show that over 70 per cent of Internet users also use social media. This is where the community is at. With this in mind, we have met them halfway, on their own turf. Feedback has been phenomenal. A KA recent post on our group sums it up: “I think this group has bridged the gap for people who possibly would not have asked (questions) to begin with. Members say how much easier it is to keep kosher, and it does not have to be daunting and scary.”

How do you administer every query among all the other things you have to do?

Truth is, it does take up much time, but contrary to what most people think, I’m not on Facebook all day. All posts come as an e-mail, which I respond to, updating the page automatically. I am a self-confessed tech junkie, and between my PC, laptop, iPad and smartphone, I am always connected. Mitzvah observance doesn’t keep office hours, and I am motivated by the fact that every reply I send is facilitating the performance of another mitzvah.

The kashrut division ensures that products are made kosher, daily. How do you do this?

We don’t actively seek new products. Companies contact us. Kashrut is by far the largest and most active division within the UOS and consumes most of our resources. It is one of the cornerstones of Jewish life and affects just about every consumer, even those who don’t yet keep fully kosher. I’m passionate about kashrut and I make it my business to get personally involved in all aspects of the department.

Are there any projects on the go that we should know about?

We are currently testing an app for iPhone which will be released soon, to replace the traditional booklet. We are also rebuilding our website, which is extremely popular. It will be even more user-friendly with lots of new features.

What are your favourite new products that have become or are becoming kosher?

We are currently working on a locally produced whisky which has won international awards. There are also some new chocolates coming our way. My personal favourite is the new Simba Salt & Vinegar Chipstix.

What kind of staff work for the kashrut division and what qualifications do they need?

The kashrut division is a vibrant and buzzing small enterprise, employing people with varying skills and talents, comprising Beth Din dayanim, Rabbi Boruch Talberg, (head of kashrut) and two food technologists who provide scientific and analytical know-how.



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The Power to Surprise

No tot too young to start on classical music

ROBYN SASSEN

What started off as a babysitting exercise for the children of ballet dancers his mother was teaching, has blossomed into a whole career for 26-year-old French horn player Gideon Rodgers.

“I realised the need to have a standby profession,” he said, explaining doing an elective major in musical education in his BMus degree at Pretoria University.

“I’ve performed a bit for the JPO and my father’s Johannesburg Festival Orchestra. I know there aren’t many horn players in SA, but that doesn’t mean there are many jobs. I

always knew I would teach; I had no idea my pupils would be quite so small!

“My first pupil was all of two,” he said. “I was not sure a child of that age could appreciate the concept of music. But she did and it’s become a regular fixture.”

Rodgers teaches Orff Schulwerk, a “child-centred way of learning” devised by composer Carl Orff in the 1920s. It blends the Kodaly, Dalcroze Eurhythmics and Suzuki methods, using music, movement, drama and speech.

“We use percussion and movement; if they choose to do music later, an understanding of it would be second nature.”

A member of the Orff Schulwerk Society of SA, Rodgers adds: “Not many children are taught by a male teacher in the formative years; I believe I bring something unusual. The kids think I’m like this great big grizzly bear that plays with them.”


Rodgers started recorder as a six-year-old, under horn player Gary Roberts. As a toddler he learned the Kodaly method with Heather Maclean.

“I wanted to start the French horn there and then when I was six, having fallen in love with it from videos I’d been weaned on of orchestras,” said this child of a musical family. He had to wait till he was 12.


“I’ve never fallen out of love with it; there



Gideon Rodgers with one of his young pupils, Haruto Hojo.



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have been times I’ve detested it,” he tells of the practicalities of performing an instrument considered the most difficult, one for which you need the lung capacity to push through pipes extending to more than 3m.

“But wait, there’s more,” he laughs. “The French horn’s mouthpiece horn is like a metal raspberry. It has to fit your mouth exactly.”

Boasting a childhood and young adulthood of shul choir affiliation, Rodgers is also a tenor with the Lewandowski Chorale.

“When the choir was invited to perform in the Lewandowski Festival in Berlin, Adam Golding, its founder and conductor realised a terrifying dream. We performed alongside established choirs from Warsaw, Jerusalem, Paris,” he smiles at the initiative’s chutzpah.

- Rodgers’ company, *Music For Young Minds*, is for children aged 2 - 6: 072-425-0485.
- The Lewandowski Chorale performs at the Soweto Theatre on October 6 and at Auto and General Theatre on the Square in Sandton on November 2.



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Photo courtesy Art Works for Change



Yoko Ono, Japan “Cut Piece”. Video of live performance with audio.

‘Off the Beaten Path’ exhibit moves away curtain on violence

ROBYN SASSEN

Violence against women headlines contemporary society’s self-awareness. Has it to do with us having the audacity to move aside the curtain on violence perpetrated behind closed doors? “Off the Beaten Path”, an international exhibition engaging with this issue, opens at the Johannesburg Art Gallery next week.

Said curator Randy Rosenberg (inset), a veteran curator and the founding driver of Art Works For Change, the Californian-based organisation supporting the exhibition: “My curatorial interest evolved from my early training as an art therapist. I was always looking for meaning in art.

“The work of another artist brought this issue to my attention. Mexican-born artist, Susan Plum, created a powerful work addressing the missing women of Juarez, a shocking series of incidents in northern Mexico in 1993, in which hundreds of girls and women from a particular socio-economic sector, were murdered.

“The term ‘femicide’ was used to describe it. The government played a scant role in solving this crime.”

Plum wrote to Rosenberg, describ-

ing her project as a seed for a global problem. “As a result, ‘Off the Beaten Path’ was born in 2009.

“The 30 individuals and collaborations, living and dead, were chosen for this show for their capacity to hold an expansive vision and their international recognition.

“Names include Serbian Marina Abramovic, considered the international grandmother of performance art, the late Louise Bourgeois, French-American artist, considered the founder of confessional art, Egyptian glass artist Mona Hatoum, Yoko Ono, widow of John Lennon, Israeli performance artist Miri Nishri. The project combines the highest integrity of art with messaging and storytelling.

“Gender-based violence occurs in every segment of society, regardless of class, ethnicity, culture, or whether the country is at war. Often, the victim’s only crime is she is female.

“The art in the exhibition ranges from video installation and performance to traditional painting, photography and sculpture. Most of the



works are not literal; we aren’t interested in recreating violence through sensationalism. We curate lyrical artwork that can become a portal.”

The biggest challenge this exhibition faced in coming to South Africa, was fundraising. So far, it has travelled across Europe. It opens in New

York next year.

“When we encounter violence against women, we as a society experience blindness. We consider domestic violence, a ‘family affair’. Honour killings of women are ‘cultural’.

“The rape and torture of women during war is ‘inevitable’. We’re incredulous that sex trafficking occurs close to home. As such, systemic sources of violence are overlooked.

“Can art foment social change?” she asks. “We hope that the artworks in this show can push the door open a little wider and in the process shed new light on an old problem.”

• “Off the Beaten Path” is at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, September 8 - November 17.

Buskaid’s long-awaited concert around the corner



Photo by Graham De Lacy

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble, the brainchild of British viola player Rosemary Nalden, has achieved many notable successes during 2013; it celebrates its annual concert on September 7 at the Linder Auditorium.

Founded in Diepkloof in 1997, hatched from a London-based busking initiative in 1992, it actualised a dream to ensure every township child the opportunity to learn and play classical musical; Buskaid continues to be driven to new heights by Nalden.

In May, in recognition of her Buskaid activities, Nalden was granted honorary membership of the UK’s Royal Philharmonic Society, an honour which has been bestowed upon only 131 musicians in 200 years.

Nalden also celebrated the BMus graduation in June of two of her students, Kabelo Monnathebe and Tiisetso Mashishi, from the Royal Academy of Music in London.

The Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble’s much-anticipated concert features a musically varied and innovative

programme, with both graduates as soloists.

Monnathebe will play the theme from the film featuring Maggie Smith and Judy Dench, Ladies in Lavender, while Mashishi is the soloist in contemporary British composer John Woolrich’s haunting Ulysses Awakes.

With his customary virtuosic flair, another Buskaid, Simiso Radebe (now halfway through his BMus degree at the Royal Academy of Music) will star as gypsy violinist in Hungarian composer Jen Hubay’s Hejre Kati. The concert will also include Buskaid’s trademark performance of music by 18th century French composer Jean-Philippe Rameau, and a beautiful transcription by Hermann of some of the Brahms’ Liebeslieder Waltzes and some lighter songs and new kwela arrangements, with Cecelia Manyama and Mathapelo Matabane as vocal soloists.

• For further information, contact Buskaid: (011 442-9676, bull@buskaid.org.za; rosemary@buskaid.org.za or visit www.buskaid.org.za

Jin Ho Won back in SA to dance Cinderella

OWN CORRESPONDENT

South Korean ballerina Jin Ho Won (21) has arrived in Johannesburg to dance the title role in Iain MacDonald’s new production of Cinderella for South African Mzansi Ballet, which premieres at the Joburg Theatre on September 13.

Won first danced into the hearts of South Africans in 2012 when her exquisite style and elegance won her two gold medals in the senior division of the Cape Town International Ballet Competition.

She also distinguished herself at the Prix de Lausanne in Switzerland and Youth America Grand Prix in New York. Johannesburg, however, will have the privilege of seeing her in a ballerina role in a full-length ballet.

SAMB’s new production of artistic director and choreographer Iain MacDonald’s Cinderella is danced to the champagne-infused melodies of Johann Strauss II. The lilting melodies of Strauss’ only full-length ballet score, will be heard in Johannesburg for the first time, replacing the more familiar Prokofiev, bringing irresistible dazzle to the classic rags-to-riches tale.

Cinderella is the first production to be presented since the announcement in June of generous funding for



Jin Ho Won, the South Korean Cinderella this ballet season.

the ballet company from the City of Johannesburg.

• Cinderella is at Joburg Theatre, September 13 - 29: bookings through Computicket or Joburg Theatre 0861-670-670 or www.joburgtheatre.com

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From page 3

He specifically mentioned the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, SA Zionist Federation “and the controversial Jewish Community Security Organisation (CSO)”.

The PSC’s Freeman, although Jewish himself, found he was being asked for ID details. He called back and recorded the conversation, as did another member of the anti-Israel lobby. Those were the calls released on Monday at the PSC/ BDS media briefing.

“Wits concert: Jews only please”, screamed the front page banner headline of this week’s edition of Wits’ campus newspaper Vuvuzela, on Tuesday. “Background checks are to be conducted on people who wish to attend the concert happening at Wits this Wednesday to ensure they are Jewish according to a set of recordings released by BDS which they say is proof of ethnic racism and profiling practised by some of the organisers of the Daniel Zamir concert that will be held in the Wits Great Hall on August 28,” read the story.

In one of these voice recordings the students asked if they are making sure that “this is a Jewish only event”. “Yes, it is,” was the reply from the ticketing agent, and it would be done by taking the ID number of anyone wanting to attend the event.

The recording was a set-up

Zev Krenkel denied that the concert was for Jews only. He accused those trying to disrupt the event of a “desperate last-ditch tactic to discredit” the concert.

While not disputing the validity of the recordings, he said they were a “response by an independent contractor engaged to sell tickets, who had simply misunderstood what the brief was”.

Wits PhD student Serge Tshibangu, confirmed this. He said the allegations made by PSC/BDS were untrue as he had ordered a ticket and had received confirmation of the order, even though he was African.

“I totally disagree that it is a racist concert,” he said. He ordered his tickets on Monday. He had to give his full names and ID to buy the ticket.

According to the recording, the Jewish organisations bought the tickets so they could control who came to the events, by doing background checks. BDS claim that the background checks would be conducted by the CSO which, says Desai mistakenly, is led by “a former general of Israeli forces”.

The validity of the recordings has not yet been verified, but a community activist and lawyer, who asked not to be named for professional reasons, told the Jewish Report that the taping of the conversations was illegal. “A charge of crimen injuria can be laid against the callers,” she said. “It is also invasion of privacy and there could be a possible civil claim too.”

As for the controversy regarding the ticket sales, Habib told the Jewish Report that there was no controversy. “We are having an event. The tickets were on sale through our normal ticketing agents.” It was not uncommon for organisations to buy tickets in bulk, he said. “Whatever organisations decide to do with these tickets is not my business.”

The proposed protest

Asked if BDS or the PSC was the main role-player in the planned protests, Freeman told the Jewish Report: “The PSC is a society of students at Wits and has similar aims as BDS.

“BDS’ interest in the concert was whether it was ‘boycottable,’” he said, explaining that the

BDS website defines what were “boycottable” events or circumstances. In this case, the BDS guideline was that the concert “is painting Israel in a positive light, while all the atrocities are proceeding”.

In any case, said Freeman, it was insensitive of Wits “to hold the concert while the outcome of the hearing (of the March protesters) is still outstanding”.

Jewish leaders say security is important

Kluk told the Jewish Report on Tuesday that the concert was open to all. She said the Board had “a very serious concern” as a result of what had happened at the Reshef concert.

“If it were not for the awful thuggish behaviour by those who are now being charged by the Wits administration, there would be no need for any of the security measures we are forced to pursue this time.”

The SAZF’s national chairman, Avrom Kren-gel, summed up the importance of security for the Jewish Report: “When you attend a rugby match, you agree not to run on the field and spoil the game.”

“Not allowing in forces dedicated to the destruction of Israel, is not racial profiling,” says Cape SAZF Chairman Levitas, “it is a necessary and pre-emptive step to minimise the risk of a repeat of the events at the Reshef concert.”

Habib, meanwhile, said that he had spoken to some of the Jewish organisations this week. While he told them that he could not guarantee that no protesters would gain access to the hall - by having bought tickets before they were snapped up by the Jewish organisations - “if they want to disrupt the concert I will have security in the hall to remove them as diplomatically as possible”.

Habib said he had been clear with all parties that Wits’ own security, if needs be in co-operation with the SAPS, would be the only security allowed on Wednesday night. “We will arrest any private security (personnel) from any side” if they are on the scene, he added.

Habib: this is not a crossroad for Wits

“I don’t believe that this is a crossroad for Wits,” said Habib, “there have always been groups (at Wits) that have opposed free speech.” But he added he would not stand for it. It was his responsibility to ensure that free speech reigned and that the Wits campus was a safe place for all.

While he believed that there was no way protesters would be allowed to disrupt the concert, he conceded that if they were to do so, it would be a sad day indeed for Wits.

Even if the majority view was that the minority was incorrect, he said, “it is my responsibility to ensure that the minority can express themselves”.

Habib has taken over at a time where there hasn’t been so much tension between Wits’ management and students, since the seventies. But he seems to be taking matters in his stride. On Monday he laid out his vision for taking Wits from one of the pre-eminent universities in Africa, to the next step among global learning institutions, in part by attracting a far higher percentage of post-graduate students.

As the Jewish Report goes to print today (Wednesday), with the concert set to begin in one hour’s time, by the time readers read this they will do so with 20:20 hindsight of events and a good idea of where Wits and its Jewish students and alumni are going from here...

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Kasim Hafeez tells packed Beyachad of his political conversion



DAVID SAKS

It is pretty much a given that a former Islam-ist extremist who has undergone a complete ideological conversion to become a sought-after speaker on pro-Israel platforms, will receive a warm reception from a South African Jewish audience.

What Kasim Hafeez (pictured) had to say when he addressed a packed Beyachad auditorium last week, certainly did resonate with his listeners. However, it was more than a case of merely saying the right things. Those present were from the outset won over completely by the speaker's obvious sincerity, frankness and innate sense of fairness that had enabled him to break free of a lifetime of indoctrination and inculcated prejudice to embrace his present worldview.

It was a bonus that Hafeez displayed a delightful turn of humour which, without straying into malice or bitterness, held up to ridicule the absurdity of what he had been led to believe and of which his old self was more often than not the target.

Hafeez was in the country on a whistle-stop speaking tour organised by the SA Zionist Federation. He recounted his own story of growing up in the United Kingdom and how, like many young Muslims of the time, he was caught up in the growing radicalism of the local Muslim community.

He became increasingly exposed to a worldview in which Muslims were depicted as perennial victims of injustice the world over and in which the Jews occupied a special place in the pantheon of evil oppressors whom it was every good Muslim's duty to fight and eradicate.

The extent of Hafeez's radicalisation reached the point when he was poised to return to Pakistan to join a jihadist terrorist training group. It was then that he chanced upon a copy of Alan Dershowitz's The Case for Israel.

Unusually for someone of his ideological beliefs, he decided to read the book, fully expecting to be able to swiftly debunk it. Perhaps even more unusually, on being unable to do this, he did not hastily put the book aside but instead began reading more deeply into the subject in the hope of finding answers to what he realised posed a threat to his entire belief system.

The more he learned about the history of Israel/Palestine and of the Jewish people themselves, the more untenable did his former beliefs become.

Eventually, his explorations took him to Israel, and it was through speaking to Israelis of all backgrounds and seeing how the country really worked, that he not only accepted that what he had been taught to believe was wrong, but that he had a moral obligation to communicate this realisation to others. This he had been doing ever since.

Ironically, this watershed visit nearly could not go ahead. Hafeez gave an entertaining account of how he had been questioned for eight hours at Ben-Gurion Airport after in essence saying that the reason for his visit was that he had once been an anti-Semite but now was not sure and wanted to check the situation out for himself.

After a lengthy grilling, he was told he could proceed, but was advised, next time he came to Israel, to simply say that he was there for a holiday.



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Why should the Rosh Hashanah challah be round?



ALIZA BULOW

All year long our challah is braided, but it is round for Rosh Hashanah. What does the challah’s shape teach us about this special time of year?

Rosh Hashanah is a holiday filled with physical doorways into the spiritual world. The blasts of the shofar are the prime example of this. But there are many others as well All year round, we dip our challah in salt before distributing it; during the High Holy Day season, we use honey so that we may have a sweet year. For the same reason, many make a sweeter challah dough as well.

We also begin the evening Rosh Hashanah meals by dipping apples into honey and reciting a prayer for a good and sweet year. Some continue with a Rosh Hashanah “seder”, sampling many different foods and reciting a prayer that contains an allusion to the food’s Hebrew name.

Every Jewish custom is significant on a very deep level. Some have levels that we can access; others are beyond our grasp. Even the shape of the loaf of challah can teach us something deep about the holiday on which it is consumed.

Creative energy

The Shabbat challah is braided. “Six days shall you work (engage in creative activity), and on the seventh shall you desist” (Exodus 34:21). Part of the preparation for the Shabbat is engaging in melacha, creative activity.

Braiding is creative activity. The braid is a shape that does not appear in nature. It is a shape that is made by humans and it is representative of the human ability to manipulate the raw material of the world. Braiding the challah strands helps us harness our creative capacities for the purpose of observing the Shabbat.

But braiding is more than that. The Talmud tells us that G-d Himself braided Eve’s hair in preparation for her wedding to Adam (Bra-

chot 61a). Was He merely beautifying her? Rabbi Avraham Chaim Feuer teaches that G-d’s braiding of Eve’s hair was His wedding gift to the couple.

He was arranging her creative energies, channelling her imagination into an ordered form that would allow her to maximise her potential as a wife. He was both charging her and gifting her with the ability and the task of channelling the energy of the couple into positive and creative directions. The braid represents that directive, to focus and give order to the energies of one’s household.

Significantly, many loaves are braided out of six strands. Six represents the days of the week

that are not Shabbat.

70 faces of Torah

Round challahs are unique to the High Holy Day season. Some say they represent a crown that reflects our coronating G-d as the King of the world.

Others suggest that the circular shape points to the cyclical nature of the year. The Hebrew word for year is “shana”, which comes from the Hebrew word “repeat”. Perhaps the circle illustrates how the years just go round and round. But Rosh Hashanah challahs are not really circles; they are spirals...

There are 70 faces to the Torah, or in Hebrew,

shiv’im panim la’Torah. This means that there are 70 ways to understand every facet of Torah.

The word “panim” can be translated either as “face”, or as “innerness”. Thus the Torah presents 70 different “faces”, appearing differently depending on the psychological, intellectual and spiritual angle from which it is examined. It also means that there are 70 different inner realities for every facet we can see.

Turning a different one of our faces to the Torah means that our “receptor sites” are different, and we are able to tune into a new aspect each year.

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What is Tashlich?

DINKA KUMER

Tashlich comes from the Hebrew word “to cast”, referring to the intent to cast away our sins via this meaningful and ancient Jewish custom common to both Ashkenazi and Sephardic communities.

Tashlich is usually performed on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. If the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, Tashlich is done on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.
It may be performed up until Hoshanah Rabba (the last day of Succot), as some communities are anyway accustomed, except on Shabbat.



We commemorate the self-sacrifice of Abraham by going to a river bank. Special verses are recited next to a body of water, such as a sea, river, stream, lake or pond, preferably one that has fish (though when no such body of water was available, some rabbis were known to do Tashlich next to a well, even one that dried up, or next to a bucket of water).
Upon concluding the verses, the corners of one’s clothes are shaken out; for males, this is usually done with the corners of the tallit katan (tzitzit garment).
Though Tashlich is not mentioned in the Talmud, its earliest reference appears to be in the book of the Prophet Nehemiah (8:1) which states, “All the Jews gathered as one in the street that is in front of the gate of water.” This gathering is known to have taken place on Rosh Hashanah.

Many reasons are given for this custom:

- One reason for saying Tashlich next to water goes back to Abraham’s trip to sacrifice his son, Isaac, which took place on Rosh Hashanah. On the way to the designated location, the Satan tried several times to undermine Abraham’s progress. One of the Satan’s tricks was to have a river materialise and block Abraham’s path. Undeterred, Abraham forged on straight into the river followed by his small entourage. Upon reaching the middle of the river when the water reached his neck, Abraham prayed to G-d and the river dried up. We commemorate the self-sacrifice of Abraham by going to a river bank.
- Another reason for saying Tashlich next to a river is because Rosh Hashanah is the day when we coronate G-d as King of the Universe. Jewish kings are anointed next to rivers, and so it is appropriate that we crown G-d as our King next to a river, as well.

- Going to a river bank or sea shore is also awe-inspiring as we contemplate G-d’s mercy in preventing the waters from flooding the dry land. The realisation of G-d’s omnipotence inspires us to repent.
- Though we do Tashlich beside an earthly river or sea, this watery entity actually represents its Heavenly counterpart. Jewish mysticism teaches that water corresponds to the attribute of kindness. On Rosh Hashanah, we beseech G-d to treat us with kindness during the new year.
- Water with fish is optimal since fish are not subject to the “evil eye” and are also known to have many offspring. Fish do not have eyelids, so their eyes are always open. This is likened to G-d’s constant supervision over us, and we pray that He mercifully care for us. Also, just as fish may be caught in a fisherman’s net, so, too, we are caught in the net of judgment. This awareness helps awaken us to repent.

While there are different versions and verses of the Tashlich liturgy depending upon community, what are common to all are the verses from the book of Micah (7:18-19) “Who is a G-d like You...” These words correspond to G-d’s 13 attributes of mercy which we seek to arouse on Rosh Hashanah as we are being judged; the allusion to these 13 attributes is known to always be beneficial.

The goal of Tashlich is to cast both our sins and the Heavenly prosecutor (aka the Satan) into the Heavenly sea. And when we shake our clothes after the Tashlich prayer, this is a tangible act to achieve the spiritual goal of shaking sins from our soul.

Needless to say, the physical motions near the water and fish of Tashlich are not what grant us atonement. But if we pay attention to the symbolism and apply the sincere desire to heal our relationship with G-d as portrayed in the physical demonstrations of Tashlich, then it serves as a crucial part in the process of repenting and returning to G-d in purity.

May we all shake ourselves from sin and be signed and sealed in the Book of Life for a good and sweet new year!

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Plungyan’s last living Jew guards its grim war memories

ROBYN SASSEN

A rugby match 15 years ago enabled former South Africans Abel and Glenda Levitt to effect a turnabout in Lithuanian memorial history.

“This was our opportunity,” said Abel once he’d heard his son had a rugby match in Vilna. “We were determined to wave an Israeli flag on Lithuanian soil.”

The rugby fixture fell through, but the impetus for the Levitts to visit Lithuania didn’t.

Abel’s family come from a shtetl called Plunge (Plungyan in Yiddish) in Lithuania; like thousands of Litvak Jews, he enjoyed an abiding interest in his roots.

In Plungyan, four-and-a-half hours from Vilna, Jacovus Bunka, a folk artist, considered the village’s last living Jew, was one of the first people they met. “He spoke Lithuanian, Russian and Yiddish. I didn’t think my Yiddish was enough; his son, a journalist, with good English, was our go-between.

“Bunka had become custodian of the memory of the murdered Jews of Plungyan. We explored the neighbourhood. The shul had changed hands many times, and was now the haunt of drunks. The Soviets had made the cemetery into a playground. And the Kauseniai Forest where hundreds of Plungyan Jews were shot, was now an improvised memorial: Bunka had carved many of the trees into memorial sculptures.

“In two days during 1941, 1 800 Jews were shot in that forest, an event which eerily was echoed through provincial Lithuania.” Geographically, a third of Lithuania is forested. “In another incident 84 school girls were raped and murdered and buried in a mass grave nearby.

“I said kaddish. It was the first of many visits for me,” said Abel who made aliyah in 1978. In his quest, Levitt found memories of many family members.

“In 2001 it was 60 years since the Kauseniai Forest slaughter; I decided to organise a family reunion, there. Forty-three Levitts



The laying of the monument to the 1 800 Jews shot in the forest of Kauseniai, in 1941.

from eight continents came.” They hosted an improvised shul service in the building that was almost derelict. “After the service we hired a venue in the Rotary Club hall, and ate herring and borsht and gefilte fish.

“There was a move to sell the shul building and establish in its stead a museum centre. From the dismantled shul, 1 800 bricks were retrieved and placed in a memorial at the shootings’ site, each bearing a victim’s name.

“The family reunion was not a private affair. We met a school teacher, Danute Serapiniene there. She is immensely proactive in educating Lithuanians about their

bloody history.”

Each year, Abel and Glenda visit Lithuania, for a Holocaust-focused art exhibition, they inspired to start. “On our first visit we helped establish a tolerance centre at the school - today there are about 80 centres all over Lithuania

“Jacovus Bunka was last year named a Lithuanian citizen of honour.” The picture seems rosy; Levitt ends with a caveat. “Lithuania’s depressed. There’s a dearth of jobs. Since Lithuania became a part of the European Union, it is no big deal for young people to settle elsewhere in the EU; it is a big deal for the Lithuanian nation.”



Lithuanian schoolteacher, Danute Serapiniene, introduces Glenda and Abel Levitt to her high school learners.

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ROBYN SASSEN

The Jews in biblical times were nomads who spent a lot of time in desert areas, places where there were no grapevines. And you have to be in one place for a period of time to make wine, argues Grahamstown microbiologist Garth Cambray (pictured) who founded and runs Makana Meadery, one of the most significant meaderies in the country.

“Biblical Israel was not a very good grape growing area. Neither was Egypt,” he believes that mead - an alcoholic drink made with nectar from honey - as opposed to wine, was the drink of choice, but also the one halachically used.

Cambray is in negotiations with the Beth Din to make his mead, which is known by its Xhosa name, iQhilika, kosher. “The problem, it seems, is that my premises are not kosher-able,” he says.

In 1997, Cambray’s gardener stole his beehive. “When I learnt why he’d stolen the bees, I was hooked,” he told the SA Jewish Report. It took a PhD in microbiology at Rhodes University and many years of research, but in 2000 he established his meadery, in collaboration with the late Winston Leukes. Today it is a self-sufficient business.

“My philosophy is counter-intuitive. Rather than discouraging others from making mead, I believe that the more we encourage mead-making the more we develop the niche, which is rapidly expanding.”

His meadery is producing mead for export mainly. “It takes 90 minutes to ferment, but it matures over a period of time.”

According to Cambray’s research, there were many Jewish family-run meaderies in Eastern Europe.

“Mead would be aged for 10 to 20 years. I’ve found in Poland the mead was aged for 30 years. It was a multi-generational business.”

His research has also taken him 20 000 years into Africa’s history; he’s found representations of bees in San rock art, which led him to believe the San people were drinking mead too, as they still do today.

He explains that the beekeeping projects run by Makana Meadery were born on the back of the mead-producing unit. It’s flourished into a sawmill, beekeeping training programmes and the marketing of beekeeping products.

“Bees are not in danger of becoming extinct,” he says, “but they are becoming scarcer, like everything on Earth except for humans. I attribute much of it to insurance companies which kill bees. Statistics reveal that they dispense with about 500 swarms annually, because they perceive them to be pests, in a small city like Port Elizabeth and thousands in bigger cities and metropolises.

Photo supplied



“A swarm can comprise up to 60 000 bees. If allowed to grow at a natural rate, 500 swarms can grow into about 6 000 or 7 000 swarms in three to four years.”

This is no longer happening; one knock-on effect we experience as consumers of bee products is astronomical price hikes. But it’s not only about the cost of honey, it’s also about pollination.

“In Africa and biblical Israel, the density of bees was phenomenal. There were 500 hives per square kilometre in Central African woodlands, before humanity intervened.”

• *Cambray is keen to run seminars on producing mead, which, he argues is more fun, less stressful and less costly than wine-making: meadery@gmail.com*

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Itzkin’s job entails changing the face of the city

ROBYN SASSEN

Eric Itzkin’s job title evokes characters penned by Jorge Luis Borges. Being Deputy Director of Immovable Heritage for Johannesburg, he assures, is far from stuffy - it’s about changing the city’s face.

“I have sites of built heritage, Struggle sites and spaces of cultural interest in my portfolio. From architectural to archaeological heritage, Johannesburg is diverse.”

After completing a degree in social anthropology under the late David Webster at Wits, Itzkin went into exile in Zimbabwe, returning to South Africa in 1989.

“I did a postgraduate diploma in librarianship and joined the Johannesburg Public Library. I moved to MuseumAfrica as a curator, some years later, curating exhibitions like Gandhi’s Johannesburg, which manifested as a book.”

He did honours in information studies at former Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg), and a masters in heritage studies at Wits.

“In 1999 heritage legislation in South Africa changed its focus from national monuments to national heritage research, which lent more emphasis on municipal government.

“The City of Johannesburg created this office,” he looks out the window of the 1930s art deco building where it is housed. “I was the first incumbent in 2001.

“I wrote a heritage policy for the city in 2006. In 2008, I wrote a public art policy for the city. This job has taken the city and my work in a new direction.

“Hundreds of public art works have been



commissioned. About R10 million has been spent on it.” Examples are the Eland sculpture, by Clive van den Berg outside Wits University and William Kentridge’s Firewalker on the Queen Elizabeth Bridge.

Itzkin has been instrumental in the 200-odd blue heritage plaques all over Johannesburg. “Our new age plaques are of a resin-composite blending rubber with cement. Traditionally, they were ceramic which was not totally reliable. The inscription is a statement of significance.”

Itzkin writes the inscriptions, but “experts check, vet and enrich them. You don’t want too much of the same approach, but facts

must be 100 per cent correct.”

What makes a site heritage worthy? “Heritage is about what a society considers valuable. It’s never linear, often emotional. My concept of heritage is broad and eclectic. I like to bob around and pick up different things to vary it. But it’s not done in isolation. The public’s suggestions play a role.


“Much of Jewish heritage in Johannesburg has not been maintained,” he adds. “Many shuls have been sold or abandoned.” An exception is the Reform Synagogue in Hillbrow, which he agrees have been kept in exemplary condition by Reeva Forman.

Another duty of Itzkin’s is renaming. “Place


names have political pressure. There’s now an Abu Bakr Asfat Street - it was previously the R554, between Soweto and Lenasia. The man for whom it is named was a Struggle hero who used to commute between the two. Still to do for this renaming is the unveiling of the street labels.”

On the cards is the renaming of Savoy Park, the Weinberg Family Park, for Struggle heroes Eli and Violet Weinberg and their children.

Itzkin, who unveiled the plaque outside the Norwood home of the Weinbergs earlier this year, added: “We’d like to have a new public artwork to celebrate the Weinbergs in their park; watch this space.”




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UJW as relevant today as it was yesteryear, says Di Levine

SHIRA DRUION
AND OWN CORRESPONDENT

Di Levine (pictured), a social worker with 40 years in the field, who was earlier this year elected Union of Jewish Women’s branch chairman in Johannesburg, says she would like to see the work of the UJW expanded into empowerment and skills development. And she appealed for younger blood.

The Jewish Report asked her what it meant to head an organisation “that no longer really knows what it stands for in a post-apartheid society, and the challenges she and the organisation face”.

“The Union,” she says, “has a mission to serve the Jewish community and the community at large. I would like to see our work expanded in both areas, as I’d like to see the Johannesburg branch of the Union moving towards becoming a community development centre where the emphasis is on empowerment and skills development.

“My vision follows and digresses from the historical trend of UJW initiatives. The Union has a proud record of service to the community. All of our services remain as relevant today as they were on the day they were established.

“For example, Kosher Mobile Meals continue to provide quality food to 160 needy Jewish people. In response to increasing levels of poverty, we have extended our feeding schemes to disadvantaged communities.

“However, at the same time we are turning our attention to empowerment projects. We know the most critical problems facing our society are a lack of skills and job creation. It’s easy to give out food and clothing, but difficult to create jobs and impart skills.

“Another challenge is one that many voluntary service organisations also wrestle with, namely how to attract younger people to become involved and to assume leadership positions to ensure the continuity of their work.

“This applies not only to Jewish organisations, but also to formerly vibrant organisations like Rotary and Lions. The reasons

and solutions are complex. Our society has changed dramatically over the last generation.

“This issue could almost be compared to a family where the older generation does not speak quite the same language as the younger one. In many cases, governing board members are not middle aged - they are grannies and grandpas!

“It is apparent that younger women are very busy. Many are employed. Many are educated and have skills to offer. I believe there are women out there who would be willing to get involved if the work was interesting. The days of asking women to do fundraising and attend meetings, are probably over. Without younger members, the organisation cannot thrive.

“In my profession, I’m used to having accountability for service standards and responsibility defined. In the formal sector qualified people are appointed to do a specific job.

“Voluntary service organisations face the same concerns as other organisations. These include staff management, financial management, budgeting and leadership development. All organisations must go through a process of becoming more professional. Including us.”



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Cyril’s arrest: Jen Karabus tells about her family’s ordeal

So much has been written about Prof Cyril Karabus over the past year, and very little about how the ordeal affected his family. ANT KATZ sat down with Karabus’ wife, Jen, for an extensive interview about how she felt and dealt with the past 12 months. This is the second instalment of the interview

Last week’s Jewish Report carried the first excerpt from the interview which covered one single day - August 18, 2012 - a date indelibly burned into Jen’s mind. It was the start of her nightmare. She and Cyril, travelling with their daughter Sarah and her family, landed in Dubai on an Emirates flight from Canada on, en route to Cape Town after attending their son, Michael’s wedding in Canada.

Her husband was arrested at the airport and branded a murderer - and she didn’t know why. She was forced to fly on to Cape Town, unaware of what fate lay in store for her husband. Jen said that she remained mentally numb on the flight home. “Absolutely nothing” went through her mind, she said, nor did she get any sleep.

The first thing she remembers after returning to Cape Town was “Bags arriving on my doorstep”. Bags is the family’s lawyer and friend, Michael Bagraim, who would become instrumental in getting Cyril back home.

“It was about lunchtime that day, just after lunch,” remembers Jen. “And he said: ‘Do you want a Scotch?’ I remember that, his first words. And he’s a teetotaler, so that was quite something!”

She didn’t take up the offer, “because I was actually feeling a bit naar (bilious), you know... had it been after five and the sun had set, I would have.”

Had she slept at all? “No. Well, in all honesty, neither did Sarah or Gavin,” says Jen. Or Cyril? I ask. “Of course he did, don’t be silly,” says Jen who knows her husband well. “At work they call him ‘Cool Hand Luke’,” she explains, because nothing phases him.

“Bags just told me: ‘You mustn’t worry about this, we are going to sort it out’, and he went to his computer and hired, from the internet, an advocate to represent Cyril.”

Jen says they still “didn’t know what was going on; all we knew is that he needed representation.” She would later find out that her paediatric oncologist husband had been charged by a Sharia Court in 2004 and unjustly convicted for murder and forgery in absentia, relating to the death of a leukaemia patient while doing a locum in Abu Dhabi in 2002.

Jenny and her family were not pleased with the Abu Dhabi lawyers. “One of (her daughter) Sarah’s colleagues, Kathy Krige, is married to an advocate in South Africa and he’s also an English barrister,” says Jen. “He said this isn’t good enough. The next thing we know, he’s on the plane from Cape Town to Abu Dhabi, at his own expense,” and fired the advocate they had.

“He had, sort of like a Pop Idols thing; he interviewed each of them... he wanted somebody who could communicate with us well in English.

“It’s all very well being a top notch, but if he can’t speak English it’s no good. He



picked the guys that we ended up with.”

But that was just the beginning of it, says Jen. “Where were we going to get this money from? We’ve got to find the geld. And that’s when Bags set up a trust for us.” Most of the donors were anonymous, says Jen, “some of the donations were R20, some were twenty grand. There were far more twenty rands! But it was very touching to see how, not just the Jewish community, but everybody just seemed to rally around.” Jenny became increasingly despondent. “In the end, nothing you do helps. Nothing,” she says.

“I just believed, all the way through, that (Cyril) wouldn’t get out of there alive.” She even consulted a rabbi to ask “how we would deal with his passing there”. The rabbi assured Jen that there were friends of Jews in the UAE. “They would put him in a lead-lined box and, in effect, mail him back to me,” she says.

“I thought (the charges were) ridiculous, just beyond belief. It’s stupid. But at the same time I did think that it wasn’t stupid to them, and they would try their very level best to have their pound of flesh.”

The family and Bagraim had decided to keep the events quiet while they tried to get Cyril released. After two months, an expat South African businessman put up around R250 000 for Cyril’s bail and he was moved to house arrest and the media were brought in.

“I always believed he would never come back, ever. I believed that they would keep him there, not necessarily in prison, but not let him go, just to be davka,” said Jen. She was “despondent and broke”.

She had a “wonderful benefactor who used to fly me over, now and then. There were two of them actually,” says Jen.

• In future issues we will continue with Jen’s harrowing tale.

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Robyn Smookler
Head of Women's
Empowerment

It all boils down to 'growth'

"Swimming to Robben Island? That's crazy- there are sharks!" "I thought Kilimanjaro was extreme but this is another level". "Impossible"... These are just a few of the comments I've heard since we've launched the ORT SA Robben Island fundraising campaign – "The long swim to freedom". Thankfully, I've also repeatedly heard: "I'm in!" and "Wow, that's awesome!"

So what exactly does drive the Women's Empowerment (WE) division of ORT JET to take on the highest mountains and deepest icy, shark-infested seas? It can all be summed up in one word: Growth.

Unlike the Guinness Book of Records, which details the person who grew the longest fingernails or the longest hair, ORT SA believes that genuine growth is defined as something which positively and profoundly influences your own life, as well as that of others.

And therein lies the answer. The purpose of our campaigns is to stimulate growth. The participants manage to accomplish what they never imagined possible and the much needed funds will be used to expand and grow our educational projects.

At ORT SA, our motto is "Educating for Life" and our primary goal is to empower disadvantaged children, struggling businesses, newly-graduated youths and vulnerable women, with the education and tools to grow their lives and make it a success.

"I am forever grateful to the ORT JET Women's Academy. It has given me a space where I feel heard, given me the wings to fly, given me a place to grow beyond where I imagined possible, and surrounded me with people who believe in me - a greater gift I could not ask for," said one of the participants.

Wishing you and your families a Shana Tova, a year filled with growth, peace, love and abundance, both spiritually and physically.

• Robyn Smookler is the Head of the Women's Empowerment Division, ORT JET. For further information, please contact Robyn: robyn@ortjet.org.za, (011) 728-7154.

This column is paid for by ORT SA

The 164th rabbi is ordained in Pretoria at the Mahon L'Hora'ah Yeshiva

**DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA**

This past Sunday evening, the Mahon L'Hora'ah Yeshiva in Pretoria, ordained its 164th rabbi.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, in a message congratulated the Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Levi Wineberg who has led the yeshiva for 12 years.

"Rabbi Wineberg's reputation extends far and wide across the world, as is demonstrated by the fact that students come to South Africa to learn from him when they could have gone anywhere else," said the Chief Rabbi.

Pretoria's Rabbi Gidon Fox, together with the leadership of the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation Council, were acknowledged for their visionary leadership of the community, supporting Torah learning, both financially and in spirit, embracing each group of

bochurim as an important part of the community. Rabbi Aron Grinshtein thanked Rabbi Fox and the Pretoria community for giving so much to the bochurim to ensure that their year in Pretoria was give and take from all sides, both benefiting from the opportunities of learning from each other.

Speaking on behalf of the newly-ordained rabbis, Ashi Sapir said when he arrived, he had no idea how he would handle the year. He recalled a statement by the Rebbe that no study of Torah is worthy without work, Ahavat Yisroel. "We can all take this message that learning Torah must be complemented with caring for others through Ahavat Yisroel.

Well-known Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, father of graduate Mendy Boteach, expressed the importance of showing gratitude and thanked the community and the rabbonim involved, for taking the bochurim into their homes and hearts.

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Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Looking back on a most successful national conference

Months of planning and hard work came together on Sunday with the holding of the Board’s 47th national conference followed by a post-conference gala dinner that evening.

The dinner was a truly wonderful celebration of what the Board has achieved over the past 11 decades and of what it is doing in the here and now, both on behalf of the Jewish community and for the wider society.

What made it additionally special was how many of our good friends outside of the community - in the political arena, media, academia, interfaith realm, diplomatic fraternity and other sectors - were there to celebrate with us. It enabled us to reciprocate the friendship and assistance that we have received from them over the years.

It was also fortuitous that our conference took place so close to Rosh Hashanah. Just as we, as individuals, reflect at this time on how to improve in our personal lives, so have we likewise been provided with an opportunity of doing so in our communal endeavours.

We were honoured at the gala dinner to have Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma as our keynote speaker. In her thoughtful, heart-felt address, she spoke of her hopes for a better future, not just of our country but for the whole African continent.

As chairperson of the African Union Commission, she is now very much at the centre of efforts to make those dreams a reality, and if we could only appreciate how much she recognised how much she considers our Jewish community to be a part of it.

The main conference tackled the tough issues of creating safe spaces for freedom of expression and how

to deal with hate crimes in South Africa. Given concerns over what has transpired at Wits University, delegates much appreciated the input of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Rob Moore and to receive from him the unequivocal assurance that Wits is as committed as ever to the principle of freedom of expression on campus and will take whatever action is necessary to uphold it.

Joanmarie Fubbs provided us with many enlightening insights into how our Constitution allows for participatory democracy, thereby allowing the public to have input into public policy. In her capacity of chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry, she was of great assistance to us in ensuring that we were able to have meaningful input into the question of labelling Israeli goods emanating from the West Bank.

In the next session, Minister of Justice Jeff Radebe, shared with us his Department’s envisaged new strategy for dealing with incidents of hate crime, which he defined as a crime committed on the basis of the victim’s “inherent characteristics or membership of a particular group”.

Following the conference, Zev Krengel and myself were elected to serve a second term as National President and National Chairman respectively, while David Simpson, Li Boiskin and Doron Joffe, will serve second terms, as the Vice-Chairmen from Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Raymond Goss has replaced Gerald Leissner as National Treasurer, after Gerald had held that position with the greatest distinction for many years. Justice Ralph Zulman and Marlene Bethlehem remain as co-chairmen of the Country Communities Department.

We are all looking forward very much to the challenges that lie ahead, just as I look forward to sharing with you how we, as the body representing the Jewish community, are doing to address them.

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

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

You be the judge



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AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY WELFARE

Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff
Group CEO

Many people probably feel the way I do as Rosh Hashanah approaches. The Judge I’m facing requires that I search my mind and heart to review all the data I can about my conduct over the past year and make commitments for the coming one, in order to present the best case for myself.

There’s also the assessment we need to carry out for the Chev and Elul seems a good time.

Corporate governance is the organisational equivalent of a personal review and we have just signed off on six separate audited financials as well as the consolidated Group one.

When I look at these annual reports, the word that comes to mind over and over is sustainability. How essential it is that we achieve it; how catastrophic for our community and those who depend on us if we don’t, and how to make it happen in the long-term.

It’s a complex subject, well beyond the confines of this column. But in a nutshell, the Chev is forced to compete with many smaller organisations clamouring for pre-Yomtov welfare funds and that’s tough for us.

It’s difficult because we carry, by far, the greatest responsibility for welfare in this community. The Chev’s R220 million annual budget is used to house, feed, counsel, treat, medicate and educate thousands of Jewish families who are unable - temporarily or permanently - to care for themselves.

And yet, we find some of our services duplicated and the rivalry for your charity funds frustrating. I’m not suggesting that we have the sole mandate on chesed or that ours is the only worthy cause out there. But when it comes to welfare, it’s certainly the biggest and charged with the most responsibility.

So, when you review how you apportioned your tzedakah this past year, and what you plan to do for the coming one, you be the judge and ask the important governance and due diligence questions: Which charities have independent boards, properly audited figures an appropriate budgeted marketing spend?

Most importantly, bear in mind that proportion is crucial and that the lion’s share of responsibility merits the lion’s share of your support.

My very warmest wishes for a Shana Tova u’Metukah - a good and sweet new year. May our partnership continue to thrive!

Feedback@thechev.org.za

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Young Rabbi Sa’ar Saked heads Beit Emanuel

LIONEL SLIER

After six years in Johannesburg as rabbi of Beit Emanuel, Rabbi Robert Ash is returning to England. His position is being taken by Israeli-born Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked. Rabbi Shaked is young for a leader of an established congregation - not yet in his forties.

“After I finished school, I... served in the armoured tank units. I spent three years in the

IDF and then, of course, every year afterwards I went to the army for a month, like so many did... I was a youth leader in summer camps for Americans.

“There I met the granddaughter of Rabbi MC Weiler, Gal, daughter of Adam Weiler, who tragically was killed in the Yom Kippur War. It was only when I recently came to South Africa that I realised her connection to the rabbi who introduced Progressive Jewry to this country.”



Rabbi Sa’ar Saked, being ordained by Rabbi David Ellenson, then president of the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, in Jerusalem, 2004.

In 1995 in Israel he was involved in the student riots, complaining about the high costs and the condition of higher education in Israel.

“At that time we did not have a language that the government understood, as they do have today. But our feeling was that the government was not doing things with integrity. We stood for solidarity with the unions and with working class leaders.”

He then went to Tel Aviv and started working at Beit David, the centre of Progressive Jewry in Israel and became an apprentice of Rabbi Meir Azari. “I was there for six years and attended the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, training to be a rabbi. In 2004 I took smicha.

“I started a beit midrash in Haifa for Progressive Jews and was head of Judaic Studies.”

Then for three years he was at The Leo Baeck Education Centre, which was the hub with a kindergarten, elementary school, junior high and high schools, Jewish Studies academy,

synagogue, etc.

Rabbi Shaked has been an executive director of an interfaith reconciliation peace project called Sulha (reconciliation).

“In 2007 we were considered pioneers and we infected the discourse that is spread now among activists.”

But, he said, he wanted “to do my work in exile and peacefully, so I saw the opportunity to come to South Africa and I am here. I feel physically that South Africa is on the hinge of a Jewish renaissance. It is the future of the world reconciliation and we have to ensure democracy, human rights and social justice - all three can be spoken in the Jewish language and can be experienced as core values of our Jewish heritage.

“Now I feel that this is the time and place and that the South African Jewish voice is extremely important.”

Rabbi Shaked is married and has four young sons.

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- Rules:**
 - Entries close at the end of November 2013. (The exact date will be announced later.) All brides married between January 2013 and November 2013, are eligible for entry.
 - Brides must be present in South Africa at the time of judging.
 - The only photographs permitted for entry, are those submitted by the bride herself, or by her photographer with her explicit permission. All entries MUST be signed by the bride herself.
 - Photographs will be printed within the time frame and discretion of the Jewish Report.
- Photographs for submission, must be in high resolution PDF and JPEG.
 - The judges’ decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
 - Members of Jewish Report and competition sponsors, will not be allowed to vote on family member entries.
 - Very important: Please note that all photographs MUST be submitted to brides@sajewishreport.co.za - a form is available on www.sajewishreport.co.za

Send the photos to: Attention: Susan at brides@sajewishreport.co.za

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JODI COHEN
Groom’s name: Wayne Tanner
Place of chuppah: Sandton Shul
Date of wedding: February 14, 2013
Photographer: Mandelle Bernstein



TARRYN ALTSHULER
Groom’s name: Darren Margo
Place of chuppah: Zulu Nyala, Fourways
Date of wedding: April 28, 2013
Photographer: Snapdragon Pictures (Leanne Williams)



TAHNA FLEISHMAN
Groom’s name: Ronald Edelman
Place of chuppah: Zulu Nyala, Fourways
Date of wedding: January 13, 2013
Photographer: Mike Lanesman



TARRYN KAPLAN
Groom’s name: Herschel Berkowitz
Place of chuppah: Kirstenbosh
Date of wedding: March 20, 2013
Photographer: John Armstrong



TALI MILLER
Groom’s name: Daniel Schay
Place of chuppah: Emmarentia, Johannesburg
Date of wedding: May 19, 2013
Photographer: Mandelle Bernstein

Please send in your photograph with:

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Groom's name

Place of chuppah

Date of wedding

Name of photographer

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Contact telephone number (groom)

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The Jewish Chronicle, London, UK:
www.thejc.com
‘ADL accuses Roger Waters over boycott call’
The Anti-Defamation League has accused rock musician Roger Waters of “anti-Jewish sentiment” in his call for a boycott of Israel. In an open letter to the Pink Floyd guitarist, ADL national director wrote that Waters’ recent statements were “offensive and dangerous undercurrents of anti-Jewish sentiment”.

Canadian Jewish News, Toronto, Canada:
www.cjnews.com
‘Reform shul allows interfaith marriages’
In addition to performing same-sex marriages and permitting interfaith burials, Reform Rabbi Steven Garten, Temple Israel, Ottawa, is now performing interfaith weddings at the synagogue. The decision was a long time coming, as Rabbi Garten had already performed interfaith marriages elsewhere.

The Algemeiner, Brooklyn, UK:
www.algemeiner.com
‘New York Times Editorial Board calls for US to manage Israel’s “enmity” towards Iran’
The New York Times Editorial Board has called on US President Barack Obama to manage “the enmity that Israel and many members of Congress feel toward Iran”, and “invest in a negotiated solution” between Iran and Western nations, calling for the Islamic country to follow international protocol regarding its nuclear weapons programme.


The Australian Jewish News, Melbourne:
www.jewishnews.net.au
‘Pollies pledge on security’
Security guards at Jewish schools in Sydney will be funded by federal government for the first time. Both the Liberal and Labour parties announced that the Secure Schools Programme will now include recurring costs like security guards. In making their funding pledges, both parties invoked shooting at a Jewish school in France.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, international:
www.jta.org
‘Al-Qaida-affiliated terror group says it’s resuming holy war against Jews’
A terrorist group affiliated with al-Qaida that claimed responsibility for a rocket attack on Northern Israel said it had resumed a jihad, or holy war, against the Jews. The Lebanon-based Azzam Abdullah Brigades, an offshoot of al-Qaida in Iraq said: “We’ve frozen the activity for the sake of the blessed Syrian revolution.”

The Jewish Telegraph, Manchester, UK:
www.jewishtelegraph.com
‘Dundee Council says no to Nablus street name’
A proposal to change the name of a street in Dundee in honour of Nablus, a Palestinian town, famous for harbouring terrorism, has been rejected by the City Council. The Dundee University Action Palestine Society was behind proposals to rename Cross Rowe to Nablus Place. The reason for the proposal dates back to a 1980 twinning agreement between Dundee and Nablus.

Ha’aretz, Israel:
www.haaretz.com
‘Russia evacuates citizens from Syria as US readies strike’
Russia has evacuated dozens of its citizens from Syria. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told UN-Arab League peace envoy Lakhdar Brahimi that armed intervention considered by the US and its allies “will lead only to the further destabilisation of the situation in the region”, according to a ministry statement.

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We wish all our Jewish clients a Happy New Year and well over the Fast.

The last word on women Orthodox ‘rabbis’ has not yet been spoken

SHIRA DRUION

The ordination three years ago in America by US Orthodox Rabbi Avi Weiss of a former South African woman, Sarah Hurwitz (pictured), with the title “rabba”, caused a strong backlash, not only in the US, but among Jews the world over, also in South Africa.

Rabbi Weiss was severely chastised for breaking the status quo of only male rabbis and promised he wouldn’t do it again - but Hurwitz retained the title of rabba.

South African Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Mosh Kurtstag explains: “Ordination of a female rabbi is not a straight ‘no’ or ‘yes’.”

However, he points out that it goes against the accepted norm of men being accepted as the halachic decision-makers. There are many women who are qualified to assist on laws pertaining to family purity and are in fact allowed to consult on those laws.

But, he says, that pertains to a specific area of law, not the law in general, and they are not allowed to make halachic decisions, known as a psak, (halachic ruling on the matter.)

Rabbi Ron Hendler, registrar of the conversion programme at the Beth Din says: “Women are relied upon in homes all over the world to determine the halachic status of kashrut and family purity.

“These are critical areas of Jewish law and there is not greater affirmation that Orthodoxy can offer to women by allowing them to have autonomy over the pivotal areas of Jewish life. There have been times in Jewish history when women have assumed leadership roles in deciding the law, such as Deborah the judge, but that was during a time lacking in male leadership, and was specific to her particular situation and time in history. It should not be referenced to as a proof for it to be accepted as common practice.”

Hurwitz, who now serves as the dean of Yeshivat Maharat, said that offering the school’s graduates ordination was

a reflection of their having satisfied a course of study equal to what male rabbinical students complete.

“When I received ordination, I was able to be present for people in a different way. People sought out my advice and my help and my halachic expertise because they understood what I had studied and what I can do for them.”

According to Weiss, there is no legal barrier to women functioning as rabbis, only sociological ones.

Following graduation from Barnard College and Columbia University, Hurwitz graduated from Drisha’s three-year “Scholars Circle Programme”. She studied for another five years under Rabbi Weiss and was ordained by Rabbi Weiss and Rabbi Daniel Sperber.

Rabbi Weiss of Yeshivat Maharat in New York, went on to ordain three more Orthodox women “as spiritual leaders and halachic authorities”, but the three new candidates did not receive any formal title.

Weeks before the ceremony, the ordination of Hurwitz was condemned by the Rabbinical Council of America, the main Modern Orthodox Rabbinic Association, of which Weiss is also a member. “We cannot accept the ordination of women as members of the Orthodox Rabbinate, regardless of their title,” said Rabbi Shmuel Goldin, the RCA’s president. “For the RCA, the problem hinged on one word: ‘ordination’.”

The Rabbinical Council of America says it supports advanced Torah study for women and their assumption of appropriate leadership roles in the Orthodox community, goals to which Weiss also subscribes.

The RCA has never objected to female graduates of an advanced Talmud programme at Yeshiva University, several of whom have served in quasi-rabbinic roles at Orthodox synagogues similar to those that Yeshivat Maharat graduates will fill.

But while Weiss sees ordination as a vital and historic step, to the RCA and its 1 000 members the move represents a dramatic and potentially dangerous break from



tradition, if not a violation of Jewish law.

The decision of what to call his graduates would be left up to the women themselves and to the communities in which they served, Weiss said, “We desperately need spiritual leaders, and to me it doesn’t make sense to tap into only 50 per cent of the Jewish community.”





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Having written nine bestselling cookbooks, chef and author **SHARON GLASS** has gained a loyal following with her simple, fuss-free approach to food. She is also a well-known TV personality with the second series of her own show, “Sharon’s Simple Stylish Meals” having aired earlier this year. She also regularly appears on a local talk show. Her travels around the world have inspired her to translate a variety of culinary influences into her recipes. She has successfully run her own cookery school for 27 years. Here she shares some mouth-watering, yet easy to prepare, recipes for Rosh Hashanah.



Brisket braised with cranberry, mushroom and onion

I love preparing this meat because I can do it in advance and then socialise with my guests. Personally, I find the softer the meat, the better - it should almost be falling apart. So, I like to buy a flattish piece of brisket. This recipe works very well when it is prepared at least two days in advance.

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 3 hours

- 1 x 454g (16 oz) tin cranberry sauce
- 250ml (1 cup) sweet red wine
- 250ml (1 cup) beef stock or 10ml (2 t) beef stock powder
- 10ml (2 t) minced garlic
- 1 x 3kg (6,6 lbs) fresh brisket
- 60ml (¼ cup) fresh rosemary
- 60ml (¼ cup) fresh thyme
- Coarse salt and black pepper
- 1 onion
- 10 whole unpeeled baby potatoes
- 500g (1 lb) whole button mushrooms
- **Method:**
 - Preheat oven to160 °C. Prepare a roasting pan.
 - Heat the cranberry sauce, red wine, stock and garlic in a medium pot. Place the brisket in the roasting pan. Pour the sauce over the brisket.
 - Chop the rosemary and thyme finely and sprinkle over the meat. Season well.
 - Peel and slice the onion and scatter over the top of the brisket.
 - Place the potatoes around the meat.
 - Cover the roasting pan with foil and place in oven for about 2 hours, turning and basting with the sauce. Continue roasting for another half hour if the meat is not soft. Then uncover, add the mushrooms and adjust the seasoning.
 - Roast for another hour or until the meat is soft, continuously basting and turning the meat.
 - Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.
 - Slice thinly and place back in the sauce. Serve immediately or reheat on 140°C covered with foil for 30 - 40 minutes.

Serves 10 - 12

Spinach salad with crunchy rice

This unusual method of serving rice is crunchy and delicious. It is very important that the oil be absolutely piping hot otherwise the rice will just become dark brown and hard and will not pop. This dish can be prepared a day ahead and assembled just before serving. It can accompany any meal.

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 10 minutes

- 125ml (½ cup) sunflower oil
- 250ml (1 cup) brown (health) rice
- 250g (8 oz) baby spinach
- 2 hard-boiled eggs
- 4 - 6 green onions
- 1 avocado
- 60ml (¼ cup) dried cranberries
- 60ml (¼ cup) sunflower seeds

- Method**
- Heat the oil in a deep pot until it is almost smoking.
 - Place spoonfuls of uncooked rice into the oil and fry the rice quickly. When the oil is hot enough, the rice will pop in seconds, resembling Rice Krispies.
 - Drain on paper towel. Continue until all the rice is fried.
 - Coarsely chop the spinach and the egg, slice the green onions and avocado, and layer all the ingredients in a large glass bowl, ending with the sunflower seeds.
 - Pour over the dressing just before serving.

Dressing
125ml (½ cup) sunflower oil
80ml (⅓ cup) white wine vinegar
60ml (4 T) sticky brown sugar
60ml (4 T) mayonnaise
Coarse salt and black pepper

- Method**
- Whisk all the ingredients together and leave to rest so that the sugar dissolves.
 - Season to taste.

Serves 6



Moroccan chicken with prunes

Since I love travelling to the Middle East, this is the next best version of a trip. Without the skin, this sauce is far less fatty, but the chicken thighs are substantial and don’t dry out. Serve it with a steaming bowl of couscous surrounding the chicken and then spoon the sauce over to cover everything.

Preparation time: 25 minutes
Cooking time: 70 minutes

- 60ml (¼ cup) olive oil
- 2 medium onions
- 60ml (¼ cup) flour
- 10ml (2 t) ground ginger
- 10ml (2 t) ground cumin
- 10ml (2 t) paprika
- Pinch of saffron
- Coarse salt and black pepper
- 2 kg (4,4 lbs) chicken thighs on the bone
- 10ml (2 t) minced garlic
- 2.5ml (½ t) minced chilli
- 2 x 410g (14 oz) tins chopped tomatoes
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 small packet pitted prunes
- 80ml (⅓ cup) honey
- 60g (2 oz) coriander
- 375ml (1½ cups) chicken stock or 15ml (1T) stock powder
- Coarse salt and black pepper

Method

- Preheat the oven to 180°C. Prepare a roasting pan.
- Heat 15ml (1 T) of the olive oil in a large frying pan. Slice the onions and sauté until they are browned. Remove and set aside.
- Mix the flour with the seasonings and the salt and pepper. Coat the chicken pieces in the seasoned flour. Brown them in batches in the remaining olive oil until golden.
- Set aside in the roasting pan until each piece is browned.
- Add the garlic and chilli to the pan with the chopped tomatoes, cinnamon sticks, prunes and honey.
- Chop the coriander coarsely and add to the pan with the chicken stock. Swirl the sauce for a minute, and then pour over the chicken and onions.
- Place in the lower part of the oven and roast for 20 minutes uncovered. Then cover the roasting pan with foil and roast for a further 35 minutes covered. Add more chicken stock or water if necessary.
- Uncover again for the last 15 minutes of roasting.

Serves 4-6



Apple and blueberry cake

This is one of the easiest cakes to make. It is so attractive with its blueberries and apple slices. I like to bake it in a slower oven to ensure that it is properly cooked through inside.

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 1- 1½ hours

- 300ml (190g) self-raising flour
- 300ml (190g) cake flour
- 190g (6.7 oz) unsalted butter or margarine, chilled
- 300ml (190g) castor sugar
- 3 jumbo eggs
- 5ml (1 t) baking powder
- 2 large apples
- 125g (4 oz) fresh or frozen blueberries
- 45 - 60ml (3-4 T) apricot jam

Method

- Preheat oven to 170°C. Pre-spray a 30cm loaf tin with non-stick cooking spray, and line with baking paper.
- Process both flours with the butter in a food processor until mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
- Add sugar and eggs and process very quickly until just combined.
- Peel and thinly slice the apples. Spread half the mixture into the loaf tin, and then top with 1 apple and some blueberries.
- Spread the remaining dough on top and then top with a row of apple. Sprinkle with remaining blueberries.
- Bake for about 1 - 1½ hours or until a skewer comes out clean.
- Brush with apricot jam when still warm to glaze the top.

Chef’s tip: This is best served when still slightly warm.

A handy Rosh Hashanah checklist

AISH.COM STAFF

Rosh Hashanah is too important to leave things to chance. Here's a handy checklist of all you need to know.

Pre-Rosh Hashanah

A key component of Rosh Hashanah preparation is to ask for forgiveness from anyone one may have wronged during the previous year. To whatever extent possible, we want to begin the year with a clean slate - and without anyone harbouring a grudge against us.

The festive meal

During the High Holy Days, a round challah is used, symbolising fullness and completion. After making the "Hamotzi" blessing, it is customary to dip the bread into honey - symbolising our prayer for a sweet new year. Then, after most of your slice of bread has been eaten, take an apple and dip it in honey. Make a blessing on the apple (since "Hamotzi" did not cover the apple) and eat a little bit of the apple. Then say: "May it be Your will, G-d, to renew us for a good and sweet new year."

Why do we ask for both a "good" AND "sweet" year? Doesn't the word "good" automatically include "sweet?"

Judaism teaches that everything happens for the good. It is all part of the Divine will. Even things that may look "bad" in our eyes, are actually

"good". So when we ask G-d that the year should be "sweet" (in addition to good), it is because we know that everything will be for the good. But we also ask that it be a "revealed" good - for instance one that tastes "sweet" to us.

Symbolic foods

On Rosh Hashanah, we eat foods that symbolise good things we hope for in the coming year.

After eating leek or cabbage, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that our enemies be cut off."

After eating beets, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that our adversaries be removed."

After eating dates, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that our enemies be finished."

After eating pomegranate, say: "May it be Your will, G-d, that our merits increase as the seeds of a pomegranate."

After eating the head of a sheep or fish: "May it be Your will, G-d, that we be as the head and not as the tail."

Rosh Hashana prayers

The supplication "Avinu Malkeinu" should be said on Rosh Hashanah, except when Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat coincide.

During the High Holy Days, the curtain on the ark is changed into a white one, to symbolise that our "mistakes will be whitened like snow".

Since it is a question as to whether the She'hechianu blessing should be said on the second day of Rosh Hashanah, we are accustomed to eat a new fruit or wear a new garment and say She'hechianu upon it.

The shofar

The essential mitzvah of Rosh Hashanah is to hear the sounding of the shofar. The shofar blasts after the Torah reading are called "Tekiot M'yushav". The minimum Torah obligation is to hear nine blasts.

Before blowing, two blessings are recited: "to hear the sound of the shofar", and She'hechianu. Once the blessings have been made, one may not speak until the end of the shofar blowing.

In the "Amidah" prayer of Musaf, there are three special blessings: Malchiot (praises to G-d the King), Zichronot (asking G-d to remember the merits of our ancestors), and Shofrot (the significance of the shofar).

Tashlich

The "Tashlich" prayer is said on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashanah by a pool of water that preferably has fish in it.

These prayers are symbolic of the casting away of our mistakes.

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This Yomtov, spare a thought for the lonely Jewish elderly

ROBYN SASSEN

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are among the few yomtaivim that really touch us in the intimate space of family. What of those who will be, for whatever reason, alone this year?

The Jewish Report spoke to a number of social workers and country communities' Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, establishing that the halachic requirements of Yomtov observation are as much of a deterrent to elderly people being with their families, as the pandemic of emigration and demographic shifts.

The scourge of the "abandoned elderly" is no secret or surprise in our community, where emigration is commonplace among the next generation, leaving elderly relatives in institutions or the homes where they've lived all their lives, some of which are now remote from areas demographically recognised as Jewish.

While Thelma Lipschitz, social worker at Sandringham Gardens, commented that the residents had one another over Yomtov and did not spend the chaggim alone, Ingrid Woolf, social worker for Kosher Mobile Meals, one of the cornerstone projects of the Union of Jewish Women spoke of the plight of those who did not live in institutions and were really alone.

"I try my best to enable as many of the people in my caseload who are alone over Yomtov to go to communal meals hosted by organisations like the Chevrah Kadisha, and even private people willing to host them, but it's a battle.

"While some are too ill or bedridden and unable to leave their rooms, others live in areas where family members or friends won't venture, like Yeoville or Berea or the South of Johannesburg, so our elderly remain alone over Yomtov."

There's also the issue of families who are shomrei mitzot over Yomtov, and the elderly parents of these families who do not want to sleep over in a shomrei household, out of their comfort zones.

"We try to give them little items to try and bring the spirit of the chag into their lives. The HOD is very generous in providing hampers for Yomtov, which contain the traditional goodies, and Kosher Mobile Meals put in honey and custard, but there have been cutbacks."

Heartbreakingly, she tells of elderly people who made Yomtov arrangements with family or acquaintances, but who have been told at the last minute there isn't enough space for them.

During the year, there are several organisations and departments of organisations focused on giving the elderly who are without family, entertainment and instances for social engagement, but over the High Holy Days, things are conspicuously different.

"Communal networks can be a lifeline," Glynne Zackon manager of the Jewish Community Services told the Jewish Report last year.

"but it depends on the individual."

Many of Johannesburg Jewry's elderly refuse to move from the areas where they've lived all their lives, even with the challenge of spending a lot of their time alone.

Rabbi Silberhaft, spiritual leader for the country communities, said: "When I sit down to my own Yomtov table, I am very conscious of these

people - individuals and elderly couples across the country, with children who are overseas, or people who are not well enough to travel, who will be spending Yomtov alone.

"The harshest thing for many of them is not being able to be in a minyan for the recitation of the yizkor prayer. That is really the crux that touches everyone.

"Some people in far-flung districts, who are alone as Jews, are supported by local Afrikaans friends who greet them and bless them on the New Year. Even though it's unhalachic, some are in contact via Skype with families overseas, and they 'sit' with them through the Yomtov meal. We do our best to send them a taste of Yomtov, be it bottled gefilte fish or chrain."



The winning bobba and zaida from 2011, Hannah and Phil Horwitz of Sandringham Gardens, the first winning couple of the competition, advising their son in Toronto of the good news that they would be spending Pesach with him.

The UJW's Bobba/Zeida trip competition offers comfort to some

Another aspect which the UJW hosts in an attempt to alleviate the pain of aloneness for individuals or couples who feel as though they are "paper" grandparents or great-grandparents, because they only get to see their offspring and progeny on e-mail, is their annual Bobba/Zaida Trip competition, which closes, this year on September 16.

The winner gets to enjoy an all-expenses-paid trip to children or grandchildren overseas that they would not otherwise be able to afford to do.

Previous winners have flown to Israel, Australia, Canada, the UK and the US. Entry forms are available from the Union of Jewish Women: (011) 648-1053.

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Rosh Hashanah spirit pervades Torah Academy Nursery School

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Through many different mediums, the children of Torah Academy Nursery School last week depicted the High Holy Days. Some classes made their own machzorim, showing the customs of the festivals, while other classes made realistic items portraying the symbols of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succoth.

The children have learnt about the festivals through songs, plays, crafts and the school welcomed the parents' involvement.

Last week the mothers and grandmothers of Chana Rivka Lewin's class joined their children for challah baking. Together, big and little hands moulded round challahs and pushed in raisins.

Chani Lavine's and Charlene Katz's class

enjoyed a delicious taste of apple dipped in honey and the classes of Nadine Benjamin, Tova Sklar and Sharene Smith, tasted all the different types of apples.

The pre-grade girls and boys were fascinated with their trip to the Shofar Factory at Chabad House. Every day the children throughout the nursery school stand and silently listen to the sounds of the shofar blown by Yossi Rodal from the Torah Academy Boys' High School.

One can feel the approach of the yamim tovim in the air all around the nursery school, from the sight of the crafts and educational décor on the walls, to the sound of the children singing their songs and the shofar being blown, the smells of shofar-shaped cookies and round challah wafting through the school and, of course, the crafts proudly taken home by the tots.



Dov Drishner; Yitzchak Youngworth; Sara Meltzer; Clara Stein; Toby Denburg; and (front) Dani Sacks, are among the children from Torah Academy Nursery School who have been learning about the upcoming yamim tovim of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succoth.

'KD Big Walk' - celebrating 65 years of excellence

GABY COHEN

Last Sunday, over 3 000 King David pupils, parents, grandparents, teachers and staff, walked together to celebrate King David School's 65 years of excellence.

The 'KD Big Walk', which was sponsored by Discovery Health, brought together all 10 King David School campuses, attracting walkers across all ages to join in a day of unity, health and fitness.

The 6,5 km walk which began on the King David Linksfield field and continued through the suburb of Linksfield North, saw lots of socialising, with many

walking to keep fit, while others walked just for fun.

After the walk, KD Jam, the King David in-house music centre, entertained the crowd, while the walkers enjoyed a custom-made King David birthday cake.

"We are hoping that the KD Big Walk, powered by Discovery, will become an annual event on the King David School's calendar, celebrating cohesiveness and community spirit. It was wonderful to see so many families walking together, enjoying the winter sunshine and keeping fit all at the same time," said Gaby Cohen, communications and public relations manager for King David Schools.

Shana tova umetuka

שנה טובה ומתוקה

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Senderwood, where Shabbos is a fun-filled adventure

Photo by Sean Korb



Lior Feigin with some Links children at a delicious ice-cream making Purim activity.
LIOR FEIGIN AND SEAN KORB

As Rosh Hashanah approaches, we are often forced to look back and reflect on our year, learning about our successes, as well as where we can improve.

At Linksfeld Senderwood community, every Shabbos this past year has been a fun-filled adventure in which we invited and encouraged our youth to participate - hot chocolate mornings in the winter, and games outside to keep cool in the summer, lunches for kids of all ages at the bayit were always a blast, and Shabbaton reunions, youth minyanim, our famous Youth Yadda booklets, weekly newsletters, golden ticket draws and a youth website, have just been some of the weekly happenings in our vibrant community.

Beyond all the fun and laughter that

we have created from our programmes, we always strove to give the highest quality services and sound educational Jewish experiences, upgrading the content of the lessons being taught during a children service on a constant basis.

Every children’s kiddush on a Shabbos morning, was preceded with Brachot which our youth were taught throughout the year. Davening, connecting with Hashem and the learning of moral lessons, was all part of our vision of making going to shul relevant to the children of today, and giving each child a positive Jewish experience which they can carry into their futures.

Rosh Hashanah is a time where Links Youth look at what has been achieved for our community, and this one has truly been a year for the books.

The learning of Rosh Hashanah at an early age

LOREN TAITZ.

The children from Loren and Andy’s Playschool in Sydenham were very lucky to get a visit from Rabbi Hylton Herring. He spoke to them about Rosh Hashanah and blew the shofar.



Photo by Loren Taitz

Minnie Bersohn kids get ready for Rosh Hashanah

MICHELLE VINOKUR

Minnie Bersohn Pre-Primary School is gearing up for Rosh Hashanah. A project is being implemented whereby the children are trying to do as many mitzvot as they possibly can, to fill up their beehives with mitzvah bees. Pictured are two little Minnie Bersohn “bees”, Gabriella Salomon and Kira Levy.



Photo by Michelle Vinokur

Annual KDHSVP mitzvah tea remains a highlight



Photo by Yael Gordon

Dalya Bacher, Julia Stenz and Jonathan Sidi, at the annual KDHSVP Mitzvah Tea.

LAURENCE HODES AND MONICA VISAGIE

King David High School Victory Park recently hosted its annual mitzvah tea when grade 8 learners welcome residents from Our Parents Home and Sandringham Gardens to the school. The guests were served a delicious tea, entertained and made very welcome. This was a most heart-warming experience for all. The learners set out their tables beautifully and creatively, and served the most scrumptious, appetising food and, most importantly, interacted so well with the visitors. Drama teacher Renos Spanoudes, was the MC. Much singing, dancing and clapping took place and the learners who entertained, did so with grace and enthusiasm.

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Pretoria scoops talk by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach



Rabbi Gidon Fox and his wife Aviva, of the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation, with Debbie and Rabbi Shmuley Boteach.

DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA

Arriving in South Africa to see his son being ordained as a rabbi at Pretoria’s Yeshiva, the Mahon L’Horah’ah, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, a favourite guest on the Oprah Winfrey show, showed his appreciation to the Pretoria Jewish community by giving a talk this week.

“Until 24 hours ago, I was the only Rabbi Boteach in the world. This has now changed and I blame you (the Pretoria Jewish community) for this,” joked Rabbi Boteach, having witnessed his son get smicha a few hours before.

In the only talk he will be giving in South Africa on this short visit, Rabbi Boteach spoke for almost two hours to an enthralled audience who came out in force to hear him.

His topic “Kosher Lust, Kosher Hate”, was humorous yet hard-hitting as he discussed the two opposing phenomena

in the world today, the global demise of the institution of marriage and the growth of wholesale murder and slaughter around the world.

This is also the topic of his latest - and 30th - book, Rabbi Boteach is recognised as one of the world’s top preachers and he was voted “the most favourite guest” on TV and radio in America. His talk connected these two topics, interweaving morals and emotions and using the four letter words of “love” and “lust” in a most unexpected way.

He received a heart-warming response when he explained, as a “love guru”, exactly what women want. The women in the audience realised that at last, this question was now suitably explained!

Together with his wife Debbie, they stayed for tea and to chat to the community until a late hour, enjoying the warmth and hospitality that the Pretoria Jewish community is well-known for.

Teeger personifies what is best in practice of medicine

OWN CORRESPONDENT

To countless members of the community, the name of family and community medical practitioner Joe Teeger calls up only fond and warm associations. At the recent ceremony of the South African Medical Association, he was celebrated by his peers and the industry, with a Lifetime Achievement award.

According to a media release, this prize is awarded for “dedicated and single-minded pursuit of medicine as a career, with distinction; to individuals who have given a productive lifetime of distinguished service to medicine, making the profession proud, and who have qualities of loyalty, dedication and professional conduct worthy of emulation”.

Dr Joseph Teeger’s “idea of care, over the past 60 years, has included house calls at all hours, accompanying some of his patients to hospital, being at hospital bedsides at first light to comfort and interpret the specialist’s diagnosis, to accompanying patients on air-flights to hospitals.”

Teeger was celebrated at the event for his work ethic and for his refusal to turn anyone away

Professor Wilhelm Steyn (right) presents the award to Dr Teeger.



“were they from Houghton or Hillbrow. He engaged in the broader socio-economic issues of the time which might affect health,” the media release continues.

“Particularly in the apartheid years, he made special payment plans for the less advantaged, often not charging and assisted them to access affordable medicine. As has been the experience of many of his patients, Dr Teeger while continuing to run a substantial practice, always made the effort and took the

time to unravel the real source of an illness, no matter how long it took.”

He continues to be a family and community medical practitioner and has gone far beyond the call of duty in assisting many in times of health and personal crises.

He is recognised for his sterling contribution by his patients and peers, but recognition from the SAMA comes as the cherry on top.

Dr Teeger shared this award with Professor Andries Stulting.

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This position requires skills in counselling, group work and community work. A knowledge of Jewish culture and religion, as well as own transport, are essential requirements.

Interested candidates, should forward a current CV to: **hr@jhbchev.co.za** or Attention: HR Dept, Private Bag X1, Sandringham, 2131, or fax 086 620 4285

Only short-listed applicants will be responded to .

What's On

Today, Friday (August 30)

- JWBS Yomtov gifts are available at the Medical Section, Sandringham Gardens during hours: Mondays - Fridays, 09:15 - 14:30 and Sundays: 09:30 – 12:00. Also available at Norwood Mall and in Woodmead. Contact: tel/fax, (011) 485-5232 during office hours, or e-mail, jwbs@icon.co.za.
- KDSF hosts Prof Bonita Meyersfeld, associate professor of law at Wits, in its “Dynamic Davidian” series, speaking on “Women Challenging the Status Quo and Making a Real Difference”. Venue: KDHS Auditorium. Time: 08:30 - 09:30. Donation: R50. (This will go to KDSF to assist Jewish Learners who can’t afford a King David education.) RSVP: **mervisc@sabje.co.za** or (011) 480-4710.

Sunday (September 1)

- Second Innings hosts Selwyn Ber- man on “An Interlude on the Piano with Selwyn”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 for members, R40 for visitors. Contact: **Grecia Gabriel, (011) 532-9718.**
- RCHCC screens the Academy

Awards shortlisted 2011 documen- tary, “Precious Life”. Hebrew with subtitles. Venue: Clive M Beck Audi- torium. Time: 19:30. Donation: R70 (incl refreshments). Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/8378, after hours (011) 728-8378.

- Benoni Jewish Cemetery “Open Day” before the High Holy Days, be- tween 10:00 and 12:00. Security will be provided and Chevrah Kadisha will be in attendance. Information: **Ronnie Suttner 083-252-0530.**

Monday (September 2)

- UJW hosts Reverend Frank Chi- kane, pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA and publisher of three books, on “Moral Decay of South Africa and the Way Out”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Sunday (September 8)

- Big Band Appreciation Society meets in Jeffrey Auditorium, St John’s Col- lege, Lower Houghton. Besides Big Bands of yesteryear, musical movie “Blue Skies”. Time: 14:15. Informa- tion: **Dave (011) 885-3525, Barney (011) 440-1996.**
- SA Jewish Ex-Service League’s

“Annual national act of homage and Memorial Service” for SA Jewish servicemen and women who paid the supreme sacrifice during vari- ous conflicts, takes place at the SA National Jewish War Memorial at West Park Jewish Cemetery. Time: 10:30 for 11:00.

Wednesday (September 11)

- Chevrah Kadisha Social Services and CAJE host clinical psycholo- gist Dan Wolf on “Abuse, Addiction and the Road to Recovery” in their “Enrich your Life” series. Venue: Sydenham Shul. Information: (011) 532-9616.
- BZA WIZO presents the SA pre- miere of the West End smash hit musical, “Blood Brothers”. Venue: Theatre on the Bay. Time: 20:00. Tickets: Phone (021) 464-6729.

Sunday (September 15)

- Second Innings hosts Hylton Marks, social worker, on “Home-Based Care”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. The cost is R20 for mem- bers, R40 for visitors. For informa- tion contact: **Grecia Gabriel, (011) 532-9718.**

- The Benevolent Gift Shop (formerly Be- narc Gift Shop) has gift presentations for all occasions, made to order. Call (011) 485-5232, JWBS. All kosher un- der the Beth Din. Proceeds to support the less fortunate in our community.
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- Chabad House hosts a series of events throughout the year. Chai Seniors - Holistic & Kabbalistic Nourishment”. Daily programmes: Men’s Kolel Mon- Fri at Chabad House Library, 09:00 -11:00, followed by lunch. Ladies Kolel Tuesdays & Thursdays. Special pro- grammes: Mondays: Brain Worx with occupational therapist, Cynthia Liptz for brain exercises, 09:00 – 13:00. Both men and women welcome. Tuesdays: Guest lectures. For more info contact Rabbi Ari Kievman (011) 440- 6600 or e-mail **rak@chabad.org.za**
- 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.**
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- Join WIZO every Thursday for a “Lunch & Learn” shiur with Rabbi Michael Katz, 13:00 - 14:00 at Beyachad. Information: WIZO office (011) 645-2515.
- 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 RCHCC, Glenhove Road, Houghton. Conversational groups. Contact: e- mail **yiddishacademy@gmail.com** or call Hazel Cohen on (011) 728-8088.



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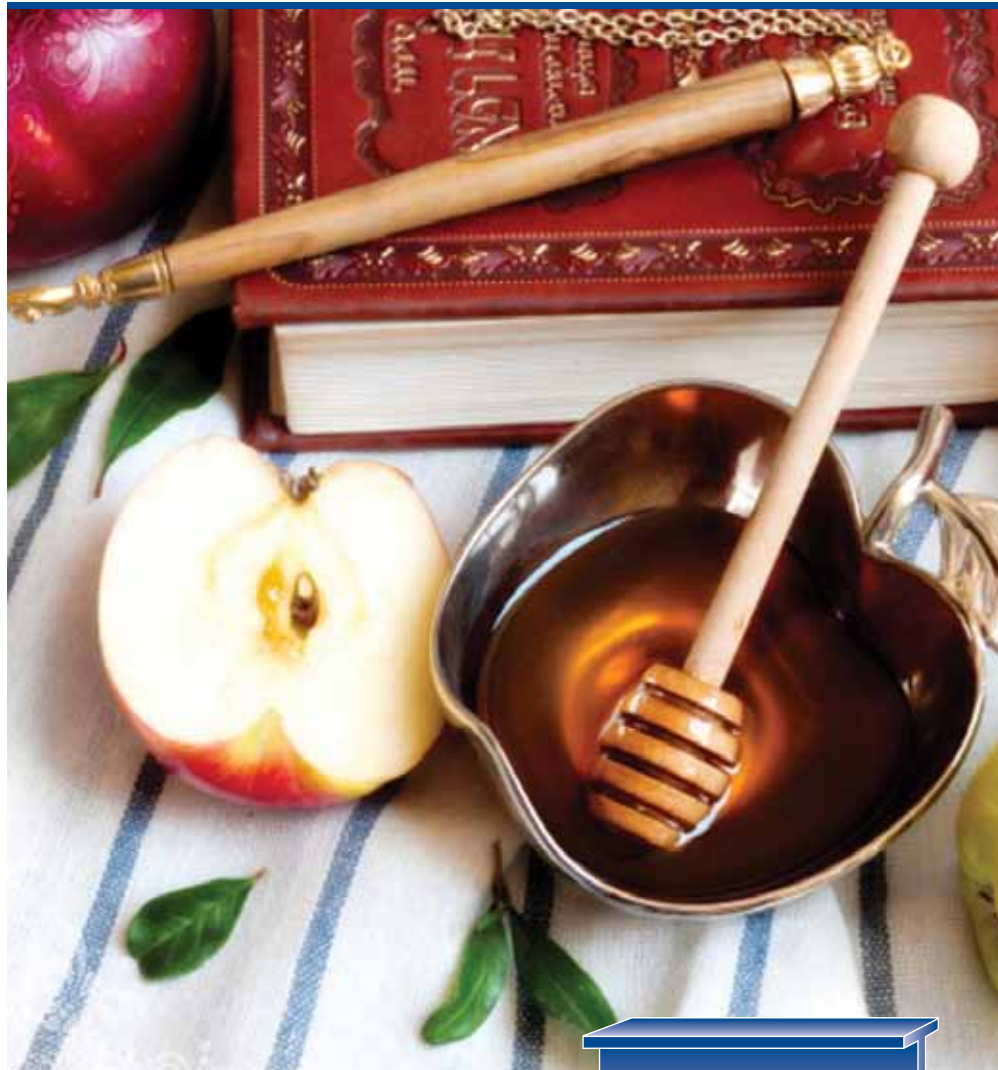
Rosh Hashanah

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Sport

SA JEWISH REPORT 48

Politics and prices could put brakes on Maccabiah



ROCKING THE BOAT
Jack Milner

Does the Maccabiah have a future?

This is a question being asked in sporting circles, despite the fact that this year's event, with some 9 000 athletes competing, was arguably the most successful Maccabiah of all time.

However, questions are being asked as to whether the event is sustainable, both politically and financially.

The political issue was first highlighted by Israeli sports commentator Ron Kofman. "If there is a sports event, everyone who wants to come should come," Kofman says. "It's sport. There's no room for religion or race in sport."

I have not been able to find out too much about Kofman but he does have a reputation of being controversial. The problem is that his comments have been picked up by the BBC's Jerusalem correspondent Bethany Bell. In fairness to Bell, she does not make any further commentary on Kofman's remarks, but the fact that the BBC has raised them, seems to have sparked the debate.

Her story has been picked up by a pro-Israeli website called BBC Watch, which monitors the BBC coverage of Israel for accuracy and impartiality. On the website they slam Bell for stating that "while a handful of Israeli Arabs take part in the Games, this is an overwhelmingly Jewish event".

In its response, BBC Watch argues that participation in some international sporting events is conditioned on geography - for example the Pan-American Games, the All-African Games or the Pacific Games. Many sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games and the Pan-Arab Games are not open to all athletes.

"Has it not occurred to the BBC to imply to its audiences that controversy surrounds - or should surround - any of those sporting events due to the non-inclusion of participants who do not meet their specific criteria."

But perhaps BBC Watch is going a little overboard as I found Bell's article well-balanced. She has received comment from Amir Peled, chairman of the Maccabiah, and has not commented on his view at all.

"Sport is something that unites everybody," says Peled. "If you come with the tool of sport, and add to it Jewish identity, add

to it love for Israel, that's the idea behind the Maccabiah.

"Thousands of people are together. You meet Israelis and you meet people from other countries and if you get dates or marriages out of it, I can only be happy."

The bigger concern is not the political pressure, but the financial constraints. The cost of going to the Maccabiah is reaching breaking point and each time it gets tougher. Perhaps countries in Europe and the US are less affected, but for South Africans, with a falling rand, and South Americans in particular, the cost has become prohibitive. At just under R50 000 per competitor this year, who knows what it will cost in 2017?

It has to reach a point where the love of Israel and camaraderie become far too expensive and the organisers will have to find a cheaper way to meet their objective.

On another subject, the Israelis and Belgians have reached a deal on the dates of their Davis Cup tie which was scheduled to be played on Yom Kippur. The International Tennis Federation (ITF) has added an extra day, but has instructed Israel to pay the Belgian Tennis Federation 10 000 euros to cover the costs incurred.

Referring to the fine imposed on the Israeli team, Asi Tuchmayer, chairman of the Israeli Tennis Federation said: "The high penalty deals a devastating blow to our budget and professional programme. As an institution representing the State of Israel and its values, we are proud to stand against all those who refuse to recognise the importance of the tradition of the Jewish people."

Israel will play Belgium in a World Group playoff tie. The Israeli Tennis Federation is crying about the fine, but the reality is that the ITF draws up the schedule a year in advance and that is the time to moan, not close to the event.

There is uncertainty at that initial stage who you will play and whether you will still be in the tournament, but it costs a lot of money to host a Davis Cup tie and to extend it by an extra day results in additional salaries, hotel costs and hiring of the facilities.

It is all very well for Israel to whinge about it now, but I find its stance somewhat hypocritical as in 2009, when Israel made the semifinals of the Davis Cup and had to play Spain, it took place over the Rosh Hashanah weekend and no extra days were asked for.

I clearly remember South Africa playing Italy in Rome over the Easter weekend and they were not allowed to change the dates, despite the importance of those holidays in Italy.

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