



# Matzah Man visits Torah Academy Nursery School

With the help of “superhero” Matzah Man, the Chevrah Kadisha runs a successful Pesach campaign. The Matzah Man came to visit the Torah Academy Nursery School last week to remind the children to bring as many non-perishable Pesach products as possible and to put them into the collection bins. Pictured are Leah Lipskar’s class with the Matzah Man. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL PELS)



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## Building SA: Amanda Bloch’s fundraising work a labour of love

Her son’s treatment at Red Cross Children’s Hospital, was an eye-opener to Capetonian philanthropist Amanda Bloch. The lack of basic facilities shocked her. She did not leave it at that; changes wrought are tangible proof of her dedication and determination.

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March 30/ 7Nissan

March 31 / 8 Nissan

Parshat Tzav

17:50	18:38	Johannesburg
18:10	19:15	Cape Town
17:37	18:26	Durban
17:56	18:45	Bloemfontein
17:57	18:47	Port Elizabeth
17:48	18:38	East London

April 6/ 14 Nissan Erev Pesach

Candle lighting

17:43	Johannesburg
18:10	Cape Town
17:59	Durban
17:48	Bloemfontein
17:48	Port Elizabeth
17:39	East London

April 7/ 15 Nissan

Pesach

Candle lighting

18:31	Johannesburg
17:06	Cape Town
18:17	Durban
18:37	Bloemfontein
18:38	Port Elizabeth
18:29	East London

April 8/ 16 Nissan

2nd Day Pesach

Yomtov Ends

18:30	Johannesburg
19:05	Cape Town
18:16	Durban
18:36	Bloemfontein
18:36	Port Elizabeth
18:28	East London

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----- Parsha of the week -----

# The barmitzvah of the Jewish people

The Shabbat that directly precedes Pesach is known as Shabbat Hagadol. There are many reasons given for this. Possibly the most commonly known and quoted reason is an allusion to the great miracle that occurred on that Shabbat in Egypt just prior to the redemption of the Jewish people.

This day was precisely five days prior to the Exodus and Hashem commanded us to take a Paschal lamb and hold it until its sacrifice just prior to our departure from Egypt.

The lamb was an Egyptian “god” and hence a great miracle in that Hashem restrained the Egyptians from attacking us in anger and retaliation for the lack of respect accorded their deity.

Many scholars posit the following in explanation: A “gadol” in Talmudic literature most plainly means an adult. The name is given to every bar-/batmitzvah boy/girl upon attaining that age whereupon they are individually responsible to perform the mitzvoth.

Many say thus: Shabbat Hagadol, the moment at which the Jewish people became communally responsible for the performance of their first mitzvah and thereafter responsible for all mitzvoth. In effect, the barmitzvah of the Jewish people as a nation!



**Shabbat Hagadol  
Parshat Tzav**  
*Rabbi Larry Shain  
Ohr Somayach Glenhazel*

Perhaps we can extrapolate a connection. The great miracle of the protection of every Jew in Egypt and the protection of the Jewish people as a nation, was as a result of the “mature” acceptance of the service of Hashem.

At this time, as so often in the history of our people, we face a biased and vicious onslaught, both in the media, and more seriously, on an existential level.

Just as in Egypt, we accepted the Command of Hashem, confident that He would protect us from our enemies and more directly, in the very merit of the acceptance of that responsibility, so too, this Pesach we should contemplate our responsibilities and rededicate ourselves to them.

In this merit may we merit the protection of Hashem and our long awaited final Redemption.

# Chivas - a celebration of leadership and excellence

OWN CORRESPONDENT

LAST WEEK, in the start of the run up to this year’s Jewish Achiever Awards Banquet, longtime sponsor Johnnie Walker pulled out for budgetary reasons. On the same day, Chivas Regal stepped into the breach, signing up to sponsor the awards for three consecutive years.

“It’s about the world’s leading luxury blended Scotch whisky assuming its rightful place as the whisky of choice at this annual event, which takes place this year on June 20, again at the Maroela Room at the Sandton Sun,” said Wayne Merris, marketing manager of Chivas Regal, (pictured, speaking at last year’s Chabad Miracle Drive).

“It is with great pride that we have come on board as an official sponsor of this auspicious event. Given Chivas Regal’s payoff line of ‘Live with chivalry’ and our brand crusade of ‘succeed as gentlemen’, this sponsorship is exceptionally synergistic with our brand positioning, the celebration of leadership and excellence.

“The sponsorship not only ensures that everyone attending this auspicious event going forward will enjoy the best of luxury blended Scotch, but has also afforded us the opportunity to assume naming rights of one of the awards, and as such, we are proud to announce the annual ‘Chivas Humanitarian Award’ that will celebrate what we essentially stand for, best captured by a message from one of our ads: ‘When you reach the top, don’t forget those who helped you get there.’

“As a Jew of 35, having grown up with



PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED.

Chivas widely regarded as the premium whisky of choice for successful people of my parents’ generation,” adds Merris, “it gives me great pride to see my generation of successful South African Jews now adopting Chivas as their premium whisky of choice, which gives me confidence that we are on the right track of our objective of transforming Chivas into a contemporary brand for today’s and tomorrow’s South African leaders.”

• Banquet organisers are currently accepting nominations for the awards, which can be sent to [nominations@sajewishreport.co.za](mailto:nominations@sajewishreport.co.za)

The Parsha in 180 words

PARSHAT VAYIKRA/TZAV

Vayikra and Tzav deals with five categories of sacrifices. Burnt offerings, animal/bird reduced to ash to represent humility, brought in awe of Hashem’s infinite reality. Flour offerings baked into matzah, brought by poor, precious to Hashem. Peace offering, brought out of love for Hashem. Parts burnt on altar to Hashem, parts given to Kohanim, rest eaten by owners. Creates peace in world by giving a piece to all stakeholders. Sin offering, comes for unintentional transgression of 36 most severe negative commandments. Guilt offerings come to atone for a variety of serious sins. In Tzav Moshe inaugurates his brother Aharon and his four sons into the position of Cohain Gadol and Cohanim respectively in a seven day ceremony culminating on Rosh Chodesh

News in brief

EATING CHAMETZ AT BERGEN-BELSEN

A document has been released in Israel revealing a halachic ruling by Bergen-Belsen’s Rabbi Yissachar-Bernard Davids during the Holocaust, that the prisoners were permitted to eat chametz for survival.

The document made its way to Israel many years ago but the decision to reveal its contents to the public was made recently in light of the upcoming Pesach.

Rabbi Davids served as chief rabbi in Rotterdam during the Second World War and was transferred to Bergen-Belsen with his family after Germany invaded Holland.

He instructed the Jewish prisoners to eat chametz due to the Jewish principle of saving a life as there was no kosher food to be found. Jewish law states that the preservation of human life overrides any religious consideration.

Kashrut Notice

WRONG NUMBER IN PnP PESACH GUIDE

The kashrut department of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues advises that there is an error in the Pick n Pay Pesach Guide 5772/2012 regarding the contact number for chometz-free pet foods.

The “no chometz” food mixes for birds, hamsters, mice and rabbits, can be obtained from Things Pets Like.

For more information, contact Michelle Rabin on 072-203-1077. Please phone ahead of time to ensure that suitable products are in stock and available.

The kashrut department apologises for the error.

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# Pesach Message from Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein



These are historic and dramatic times - Israel's looming confrontation with Iran in pursuit of nuclear weapons and an increase in terror attacks on Jewish targets around the world, the most recent one being the horrific murders in Toulouse. How do we make sense of all these events?

We live in a world with lots of information but little perspective; news cycles seem to be getting shorter and shorter, and the explosion of electronic communication and social media like Facebook and Twitter, has increased fragmentation of understanding, making it all the more difficult to gain the proper perspective necessary to understand world events in their entirety.

Often we get pulled into the vortex of a particular event's intensity, to the point where we are not able to see the larger picture. But one of the great teachings of Judaism is that nothing in this world is random; no event is an isolated occurrence and everything is part of the divine sweep of history. We need to piece the fragments together so that they cohere in a meaningful way which reflects G-d's master plan.

The mitzvah of retelling the story of the Exodus from Egypt enables us to glean and impart to the next generation a coherent, comprehensive picture of our people's history and destiny. It is not just about relating the individual incidents and miracles, but about seeing things from a broader perspective. What is the overarching storyline of our history? What is our destiny?

In our own times we also need to understand world events from a Torah perspective. From the Haggadah we learn to see ourselves as part of the unfolding story of Jewish destiny, as guided by G-d; we learn to see events not as random fragmented headlines but as part of meaningful story of who we are and what our mission is in this world. To find our clarity of purpose and sense of Divine mission we need to understand unfolding historical events in the full context of our long history.

## We need to understand world events from a Torah perspective.

To assist our community in this, I have produced a short, six-minute video message (visit [www.chiefrabbi.co.za](http://www.chiefrabbi.co.za)) which looks at the miraculous sweep of Jewish destiny from ancient Egypt to modern-day Iran. (see advert on page 7)

This short video, interwoven with the inspiring music of Yaakov Shwekey and fascinating film footage, seeks to provide a framework for understanding our destiny and for understanding the events which we are witnessing in our times. The video is in the spirit of the Haggadah, of telling the history of our people.

We are indeed living in historic and dramatic times. We need to step back for a moment, view things from a broader perspective and understand what we are going through. From this perspective will emerge the insight, courage, inspiration and faith that we need to rise, with G-d's help, to the challenges of our times.

Gina and I would like to take this opportunity to wish our entire community a joyous and kosher Pesach.

## We are commanded by G-d to speak about the Exodus from Egypt.

On Seder night, we are commanded by G-d to speak about the Exodus from Egypt. We don't just recount the historical facts but tell the story in the manner in which G-d has shown us.

The Passover Haggadah is constructed in such a way that in retelling the events and re-experiencing the great miracles which G-d performed for our ancestors in Egypt, we are actually putting the various fragments together to form a large, integrated whole. For example, we do not look at the ten plagues as isolated occurrences but see the pattern within them.

As we go through the Haggadah we realise that the Exodus from Egypt was not an isolated event but an event which occurred in the context of our people's history, going all the way back to our forefathers and -mothers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

## Sometimes we are not able to see the larger picture.

On Seder night we do not just tell of the experience of the Exodus, but about how we got to Egypt in the first place, the destiny of our people and the events following our redemption - the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai and entering the Land of Israel. We look at the full sweep of history, not just at the isolated events being recounted at that moment.

Through this G-d teaches us an important lesson, and that is that we need to look at the broader perspective and to contextualise the events of history in order to make sense of them.

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Jewish Report Editorial

# Passover – is freedom from Arab hatred possible?

The themes of peoplehood and liberation in Passover naturally evoke questions about Jewish peoplehood and the Jewish state - Israel - today.

In all its diversity, we can truly talk about a “Jewish people”. Despite centuries of dispersion in far-flung places, different Jewish communities have, to an astonishing degree, remained connected with each other.

But what say should Diaspora Jews have on what goes on in Israel - the sovereign Jewish state? If they dislike Israeli policies, should they publicly criticise? Or always support the government, since Israelis living there, paying taxes, doing army service, etc, elect it democratically?

A flap currently going on in New York tests this issue, involving a high-profile Jewish journalist in Manhattan promoting a boycott of products made in West Bank settlements, because he objects to the settlers and Israel’s control over the Palestinians - the “occupation”.

Peter Beinart - son of former South Africans who emigrated to the US - wrote an op-ed piece in the NY Times last week calling for the West Bank to be called “non-democratic Israel” (see page 20). A self-professed Orthodox Jew and Zionist, he believes the settlements endanger Israel’s existence.

His article in the world’s most influential newspaper provokes rage from certain pro-Israeli sources because he downplays Israel’s security concerns. It’s easy being an arch-liberal in NY taking the moral high ground when one doesn’t face the dangers Israelis live with.

David Harris of the AJC remarked: “It is oh-so-glib for Beinart to say: ‘End the occupation or the occupation will end Israel.’ However, simple and clear-cut things may seem from his Upper West Side perch, these are immensely complicated issues.

“A consistent majority of Israelis want nothing more than to extract themselves from an unsought occupation for the sake of peace, but it just can’t be done unilaterally. The Palestinians have not been prepared to do their part, irrespective of what they might say to some all-too-receptive Western ears.”

Is Beinart mouthing off irresponsibly?

Or asserting his right as a Jew to comment on what Jews do elsewhere, which is what a united peoplehood is about? Whatever view one takes, his vigorous engagement with Israel and its issues must be valued, since sadly, an increasing number of young American Jews are becoming alienated from Israel. Given the intensity of the politics of the Mideast, however, his argument will likely be a blip on the screen which the Mideast conundrum will extinguish as it moves on.

SA Jews mostly support the two-state formula for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as does the SA government. In an ideal world, it would be implemented forthwith, the occupation would end and Israelis and Palestinians would live side by side as neighbours in peace.

But the world is not ideal. How do you implement it in the violent reality of the Mideast? That includes the refusal of much of the Arab and Muslim world to accept the Jewish state’s existence and their vows to annihilate it - like Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad with his aspirations to nuclear weapons.

The occupation is hugely problematic, but so would be withdrawal from the West Bank without an agreement with the Palestinians about what happens next.

Last Wednesday marked the 10th anniversary of the Park Hotel Passover Massacre, in which 30 innocent Israelis were killed by terrorists as they prepared for the seder night in the hotel in Netanya.

For this Passover, one kind of freedom we might pray for is an end to the hatred towards Israel from Arabs and Muslims. Their loathing has less to do with Israel’s actions - which, like any country, are not always perfect - than the fact that it exists at all.

The South African experience shows what is possible. Despite everything that happened historically here, our leaders had the wisdom to reject hatred and vengeance and seek reconciliation. This country is far from perfect, but choosing that path gave us the chance to build something great. Could the Middle East ever go that way too, towards a prosperous, peaceful part of the world?


Community Voices

## ‘Is Israel the only safe haven for Jews?’



A paradoxical question: Israel faces existential threats on a daily basis, yet every true Zionist must believe that Israel, at the end of the day, is indeed the only safe haven for Jews, a place of national pride and protection!

DAVID ABEL



Israel’s diplomatic, military and general state power has greatly increased the physical safety of the Jewish people around the world over the past 64 years. However, this power is limited and makes life in the Diaspora more vulnerable generally speaking.

BENJI SHULMAN



Of course this was Herzl’s understanding. He would have been absolutely correct if one was reflecting on the question in 1920 or 1938. Seventy years later, the answer would be different. But I’d never ignore the long history of Jew-hatred.

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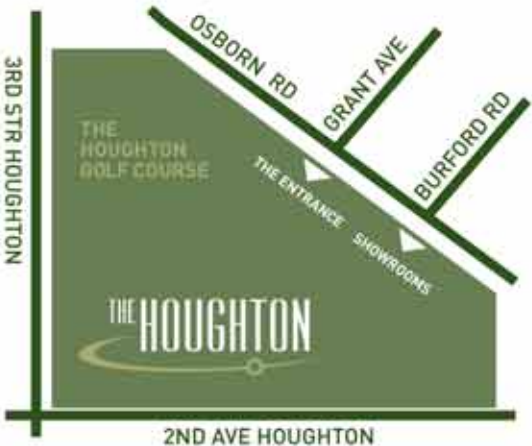
A view of phase 1 of The Houghton on the 12<sup>th</sup>



A view from phase 1 of The Houghton on the 7<sup>th</sup>

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# Bye bye, Britannica

*Britannica to be printed no more. It is not a train smash in the digital era with information just a click away.*

The end of an era has arrived as the much-revered Encyclopaedia Britannica ceased print publication. Hooray.

It is the end of the beginning of the end. Encyclopaedia Britannica, arguably the most famous compendium of all human knowledge, will no longer be produced in printed form.

The obituary of the printed book, was upbeat: “After 244 years in print, the 32-volume Encyclopaedia Britannica will be discontinued, but the encyclopaedia will live on and grow in the myriad digital forms which have been popular with millions for years.”

**Today the print edition makes up less than one per cent of the publisher’s income.**

Those who shed a nostalgic tear for this all-in-one library, are invariably the same people whose parents acquired a set from a travelling salesman knocking at their door. So costly was the investment, most families would buy only the one set. Ever. And never update it again. That made the Britannica a wonderful source of historic information, but practically useless for keeping up with human knowledge.

Don’t weep for its owners, though. They began the transition to digital edi-



**Goldstuck on Gadgets**  
Arthur Goldstuck

tions at the dawn of the commercial Internet, producing a CD-Rom version in the 1990s - a few brief years after their sales peaked at 120 000 sets.

Today, the print edition makes up less than one per cent of the publisher’s income. The saddest statistic of all is that, for the 2010 edition – the last one in print - only 8 000 sets were sold, and a further 4 000 languish in warehouses.

But let’s put in perspective what we have lost in print: an encyclopaedia updated a couple of times a decade, costing more than R10 000 for the set, and containing around 70 000 articles. In short: expensive, dated and - compared to online resources - limited.

The online edition has more than 120 000 articles, costs less than R1 000 for an annual subscription - the ad-supported version is free - and includes video, audio and links to related publications and material.

What’s to mourn? A business model that has not made sense for well over a



decade?

Let’s look at the other extreme: Wikipedia, the free online encyclopaedia, contains more than 3,5-million articles, and is updated daily. Following controversies about the accuracy of Wikipedia, Nature magazine conducted a study, and found more errors in a sample of Britannica articles than in a similar sample from Wikipedia.

The only real tears that are shed for the big set of books are by interior decorators who bought old sets cheap to make home and corporate libraries look established and serious.

Clearly, it is the symbolic meaning of this death that is more significant than the demise of a publishing tradition. Britannica first saw print in 1768, a year that in a way represents the democratisation of human knowledge.

While only accessible to the wealthy, it gradually made its way into public libraries and ordinary homes, opening up all of history, science and nature to the masses - albeit from a British-centric perspective.

The beginning of the end of the first era of knowledge democracy came in 1989, when Compton’s published the first CD-Rom encyclopaedia. They were followed by Grolier, fortuitously just as CD drives began arriving as a standard component of computers, turning Grolier into the digital equivalent of Britannica.



Microsoft saw the light, and climbed into the knowledge bed with Funk & Wagnalls to produce Encarta. By the mid-1990s, you could hardly buy a Microsoft product or a multimedia PC without Encarta being included in the bundle.

Britannica had called it correctly when they refused to be Microsoft’s encyclopaedia partner, for fear of it killing print sales: Funk & Wagnalls dumped their print edition just a few years later.

The CD-Rom was, however, only a stop-gap on the road to universal access to knowledge. The death knell of the printed encyclopaedia was really sounded on January 23, 1993, when the first Internet browser with a graphical user interface, MCSA Mosaic, was released.

The team behind it put their expertise into Netscape Navigator, which spurred Microsoft to develop Internet Explorer, and which also became the ancestor of the Firefox browser.

**The symbolic meaning of this death is more significant than the demise of a publishing tradition.**

Thanks to the browser, all knowledge was potentially a single click away, rather than via the equivalent of a home mortgage.

The browser killed the encyclopaedia, and for that we can be grateful.

• Follow Arthur Goldstuck on twitter on @art2gee, or at [www.gadget.co.za](http://www.gadget.co.za)

## A new landmark in old Houghton Phase 1 sold out, phase 2 selling fast

With residents now occupying most of the 77 apartments in Phase 1 of The Houghton, the exclusive, luxury lifestyle estate set in 68 ha of private parkland in the heart of Johannesburg’s famed urban forest, Phase 2 is now selling fast.

According to Lawrie Kreeve of Empire Estates, lead estate agent for the R2 billion plus development, about 65 per cent of the 70 phase two units in “The Houghton on the 7th” have already been sold, and only a small number of units in Phase 2 of “The Houghton on the 12th” are still available.

Phase 2 of both the 7th and 12th, will be ready for occupation by late 2012, early 2013.

In addition, construction is scheduled to start soon on a “lifestyle leisure hotel” with 180 generously-sized suites. This will be located between the phases of the 7th and the 12th. The hotel will boast both an indoor and outdoor pool, a spa, two restaurants, a 50-seat cinema, a hairdresser and have access to onsite doctors’ and specialists’ rooms.

The Houghton on the 12th (entrance on Second Avenue) offers breathtaking views of the picturesque 12th hole of the recently revamped Jack Nicklaus signature golf course, while The Houghton on the 7th (entrance on Osborn Road), overlooks the lush par 3, 7th hole. Both have a view with access to a rolling green 168 acre garden with running and walking paths.

Given the delay of the development, it’s now really exciting to see owners moving in and starting to live the unique lifestyle we envisaged when The Houghton was first conceived way back,” says developer David Nagle.

There is no question that The Houghton is unique. Certainly it offers the same levels of exclusivity, convenience, security, privacy and sheer luxury one would

expect to find on offer in developments of this high standard.

This includes five-star “hotel-type” services such as a dedicated concierge and an elegant maid service. In addition, the estate will boast a health spa, fully equipped gymnasium, business meeting rooms as well as reception and secretarial services.

But that’s where the similarities to other city “lifestyle estate” developments end.

The Houghton also offers country estate living – seven km of secure, well-lit paths that can be walked, jogged, cycled or simply strolled along past ponds and dams, beautiful century-old trees and flowering shrubs.

It’s a paradise for birds, including Egyptian geese, guinea fowl, dikkops, plovers and a variety of waterfowl – yet it’s just two minutes to the M1 highway; five minutes to Killarney Mall; 10 minutes to King David, Linksfield; and 15 minutes to Sandton.

In addition, residents are given social membership of the golf club – which is literally right on the doorstep.

“It’s like living on a golf estate without the hassle and financial burden of maintaining a golf course. What we’ve been able to do with The Houghton – because of its totally unique location – is incorporate the best of the best of estate living worldwide into a single, value-for-money, lifestyle experience that’s unmatched in South Africa,” Nagle adds.

Park your car in your basement, take a private lift to your apartment and literally leave the concrete jungle

behind. The Sandton skyline is visible in the distance, but you are surrounded by a green oasis of tranquillity.

Units already sold in the development ranged from 120sqm two-bedroom apartments (with en-suite bathrooms), to three and four-bedroom (en-suite) units which include garden duplexes with their own pools and gardens to the penthouses.

These prices range from R2,99 million, R3,5m and to prices over R10m depending on the size which is not restricted.

However, with the flexibility in configuration of the development, virtually any size of apartment can be accommodated to suite buyers’ lifestyles.

“The Houghton is all about impeccable service and luxury living that embraces attention to detail across all areas.

Thanks to the abundance of space and complete privacy, you never feel that you’re in an apartment. Instead, you experience it as your own private home – right on a golf course in the heart of a city,” Kreeve concludes.

Anticipating consistent demand for accommodation in the hotel, director Arnold Forman concludes: “People would want to live here because it gives them freedom. Owners in this world class residence will not only enjoy an immediate improvement in their lifestyle and living standards, they can also look forward to a significant capital appreciation in the value of their home. This is about living for today while investing for tomorrow.”



# Community helps Energy fulfil her dream

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY  
SUZANNE BELLING

At the start of the 2012 academic year, the success and plight of Energy Mappingire (19), a former Zimbabwean, was brought to the attention of Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy and rabbi of the Great Park Shul, by Dan Zimba, principal of Pace Secondary School.

The two educationists have formed a strong bond over the past 15 years through Cycalive - the annual relay bicycle ride between Johannesburg and Durban with grade 11 boys from the two schools and Moletsane High School in Soweto - which has expanded to become a massive outreach initiative

Last year Energy attained six distinctions in matric, studying totally on her own as Pace, a commercial school, does not offer the subjects she took. She also obtained two high B symbols. This was despite living with her brother in the Orange Farm informal settlement and looking after his three children, doing household chores and leaving home at 05:00 to



Energy Mappingire and Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, dean of Torah Academy and rabbi of the Great Park Shul, with learners from Torah Academy Girls' High School, who witnessed a first-hand account of the fulfilment of Energy's dream to study medicine.

travel to Soweto daily.

She was accepted as a medical student at the University of the Witwatersrand, but, alas, could only raise half the fees.

Rabbi Hazdan told her story at Great Park Shul's shalosh seudot one Shabbat. It made a great impact on some of his congregants who came forward to make up the difference in the fees.

The result was that Energy, at the 11th hour (the closing date for registration was the following Tuesday) was able to register and to come a step closer to fulfil her dream.

## THE JEWISH WORLD

*in seven seconds*

**The Jewish Press, international:**  
[www.jewishpress.com](http://www.jewishpress.com)

**“AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE CONDEMNS SHARP RISE IN ME EXECUTIONS, IGNORES HAMAS DEATH SENTENCES.”**

Amnesty International says 676 people were executed in 2011 with full public disclosure. The rise in Iran and Saudi Arabia accounted for the net increase of 149 recorded executions from 2010.

**The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle:**  
[www.jewishchronicle.org](http://www.jewishchronicle.org)

**“POPULATION STUDY SHEDS LIGHT ON 2011 REPORTS ON ANTI-SEMITISM, SCHOOLS.”**

The Milwaukee Jewish Federation's "Jewish Community Study of Greater Milwaukee 2011" sheds light on two smaller reports about the community for 2011, both released in February.

**The New York Jewish Week:**  
[www.thejewishweek.com](http://www.thejewishweek.com)

**“AN ANTI-BDS WARRIOR FIND HIS CAUSE.”**

Proposed boycott of Israeli products at Brooklyn's Park Slope Food Co-op, scheduled for a vote during the week, isn't the first battle involving a community institution; it won't be the last.

**Haaretz, Israel:**  
[www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com)

**“AL JAZEERA DECIDES NOT TO AIR FILM OF TOULOUSE SHOOTINGS.”**

Pres Sarkozy urges television networks not to show the footage of three deadly shootings in southern France filmed by gunman Mohamed Merah, who used a camera strapped to his body while carrying out the killings.

**The Jewish Chronicle, London:**  
[www.thejc.com](http://www.thejc.com)

**“PANORAMA CLAIMS NDS HACKING BROUGHT DOWN ITV DIGITAL.”**

A BBC documentary has alleged that an Israeli-founded company that was at the time a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, hired a hacker to bring down a rival digital channel.

**The Jewish Daily Forward, international:**  
<http://forward.com>

**“J STREET FEATURES BEINART, REJECTS HIS BOYCOTT CALL.”**

Living up to its promise of bringing together a “big tent” of Jewish opinions, J Street picks some speakers outside the dovish lobby's comfort zone.

**The Canadian Jewish News:**  
[www.cjnews.com](http://www.cjnews.com)

**“CATHOLIC TEACHERS PASS RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL.”**

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association adopted a statement calling on Israel to lift the “blockade” of Gaza.



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☆ **SOUTH EAST ASIA 16 nights**  
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☆ **INDIA / SRI LANKA / MALDIVES**  
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A person is holding a large, rectangular cardboard sign. The sign has handwritten text in black marker. The text is arranged in two main sections. The first section reads "THIS PESACH YOU MIGHT SEE A LOT OF JEWS EATING CARDBOARD." The second section reads "BUT YOU WON'T SEE ANY HOLDING CARDBOARD." The person holding the sign is wearing a grey t-shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing some greenery and a yellow pole.

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# Pesach preparations: so much spiritual and philosophical value

COMPILED BY SUZANNE BELLING

*There are two different approaches to Pesach kitchens and meal preparations - Mitnaged and Chabad. While the former adheres strictly to the Beth Din regulations, the latter is far more complicated insofar as no processed foods are permitted during the eight days of the festival. The Jewish Report approached both Gina Goldstein, wife of Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, and Chaya Masinter, wife of Rabbi David Masinter, director of Chabad House, Savoy, for their recipes and comments, which demonstrate the basic differences in cooking during Passover.*



**REBBETZEN GINA GOLDSTEIN**

Gina is the mother of three sons and a daughter, who all enjoy cooking with her over Yomtov.

She has chosen “Morning Muesli” as her Passover recipe.

“This is usually the first thing I make when preparing for Pesach. It’s a family breakfast favourite (when toast or cereal is obviously out of the question), it’s child friendly and easy too.



“When preparing for Pesach, I try to remember the mitzvah value of what I’m doing. The cleaning and checking for chometz is not just about housework; there is so much spiritual and philosophical value in all that work that we do. It’s important also to try to prepare ourselves and our children spiritually and intellectually for Pesach, not just physical-ly.

“So, while I give you a recipe to make, let me also share a quick d’var Torah. Why do we need to tell the same story of the going out of Egypt every single year? Because the telling of the story is not only

an intellectual and academic exercise about the facts and numbers, it’s about the emotions associated with the story; we feel the freedom, taste the matzah and maror, re-experience the miracle and wonders, and absorb the incredible inspiration and faith that it all created. And that is what we try to transmit to our children and families on seder night.”

**Morning Muesli**

- 1 box matzah - crushed (14 pieces)
- 1½ cup coconut
- Cinnamon
- 2 packets mixed nuts/almonds
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup oil
- ½ cup sugar

**Method:**

Boil oil, sugar and juice together in a pot until dissolved. Mix dry ingredients together. Mix all of the above together and spread evenly on a baking tray. Bake at 180 degrees C for 45 minutes, turning about half way through.

Delicious with yoghurt. Store in an air-tight container.

“I wish you all a chag kasher v’sameach. May Hashem bless us all with much brocha and nachas. “

**REBBETZEN CHAYA MASINTER**

Having grown up in a strictly Orthodox home as one of the six children of Rabbi Avraham and Marcia Tanzer, Chaya had to make the transition from a Mitnaged Pesach to following the custom of her Lubavitch husband Rabbi David Masinter.

Married for 27 years, with six children and two grandchildren, it took her the first 10 to get used to changing her pattern.

“With my mother as rebbetzen of a thriving Jewish community, I learned many wonderful tips and recipes from her which, at the beginning, I confidently took into my new marriage.”

Chaya had compiled a book of Pesach recipes from her mom and then, on reading the ingredients, “my heart began to sink along with all my naïve confidence - I could not use olive oil, mayonnaise, tomato sauce, chutney or pepper in my beloved peri-peri chicken recipe.”

So she improvised - chicken fat is made by melting the fat purchased from the butcher in a pot, seasoned with onions, then refrigerated to set (a substitute for the olive oil); mayonnaise is made with oil, eggs, salt and drop of lemon juice, whisked together until the consistency is just right; tomato sauce is prepared by chopping onions, peeling 10 tomatoes, the juice of half a lemon and mixing in pre-boiled sugar water, with chicken fat for frying.

Now, as a “seasoned Chabad rebbetzen”, she says: “I have learnt many techniques, which I have put together in a new recipe book for Pesach and am looking forward to taking it out of my cupboard. One of the most important lessons I have implemented is to start Pesach preparations early - very early.”

**Chicken Peri-Peri**

(Can be made with conventional Passover products, or home-made ingredients as in Chabad homes.)

- 1 whole chicken, cut up into portions
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon chutney
- 2 chillies
- Salt and pepper to taste

**Method:**

Mix all ingredients together, pour over the chicken, cover and bake at 180 degrees C for one hour, then uncover and bake for an additional 15 minutes.



# Glen's Awesome Salad Dressing

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In the blink of an eye, Pesach is once again upon us. This year we have an even bigger and better range of Passover products to add excitement and spice to your Pesach meals.

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In addition, our new formula Creamy Mayo and Mayo Lite cannot be surpassed. They are tangy and delicious and will make your mock seafood and potato salad “finger licking good”.

Our Balsamic Vinegar is made from the finest grapes from the vineyards of Modena in Italy. But that's not all... our bag of surprise goodies has produced three fabulous new products: Glen's Beetroot Salad, Sweet Chilli Sauce and Tomato Jam. Not only will you use and enjoy these products for Pesach, but you will want to use them all year round. Chag Sameach!

Wishing you all a very happy Pesach... From all at Glen's Salad Dressings and Sauces.



# Court finds that historic East Berlin shul has cheated

*It's open to debate whether the historic East Berlin Adass Yisroel Synagogue - which claimed 1 000 members for state subsidy - consisted of more than the rabbi and his wife.*

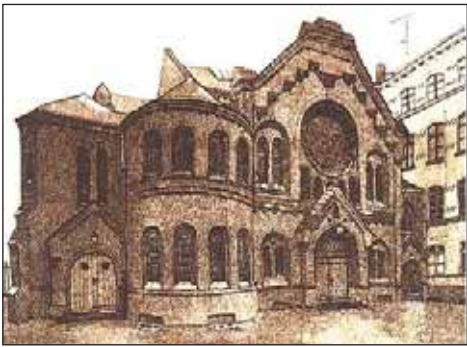
**TOBY AXELROD  
BERLIN**

On paper, it was one of Berlin's oldest shuls, a rare congregation on the east side of this once-divided city that with the help of government subsidies said it maintained services for 1 000 members.

But in reality it's not clear how many Jews, if any, attended the Adass Yisroel Synagogue, located behind a courtyard on Tucholskystrasse in Berlin's Mitte section. Nor is it clear what, exactly, the people behind the shul did with the money they received from the government of the state of Berlin.

Last week, a Berlin court ruled that Adass Yisroel cheated the state and must pay back \$265 000 in state subsidies, as well as legal costs resulting from a lawsuit filed by the congregation against the government in 2010. Adass Yisroel could appeal the ruling, but if it holds, it could spell the end of this rare East Berlin congregation.

The congregation was re-established in 1997 after German unification, claiming it was the sole successor to a congregation founded in 1869. It claimed 1 000 members, so it was eligible for approximately \$862 000 annually in government subsidies.



Between 2001 and 2006, Adass Yisroel received \$636 000 to \$803 000 each year from the government. The synagogue is not part of the United Jewish Community of Berlin.

When the state tried to audit Adass Yisroel in 2008, the congregation refused to open its books, maintaining that its status as a religious organisation made it exempt from such an audit. The government stopped funding Adass Yisroel in 2010, demanding repayment of some of the subsidies it had paid to the synagogue, spurring the shul's lawsuit.

An investigation found that the congregation had claimed government subsidies for nonexistent personnel and for a fleet of cars without submitting a drivers' log. Synagogue director Mario Offenbergs and his wife also

reportedly charged the state for their annual business-class flight to Spain, claiming they were visiting the local Jewish community.

Tagesspiegel reported that the Berlin Senate told the court it doubted that Adass Yisroel actually had any members other than Offenbergs. There was no evidence of any articles of incorporation, board of directors, personnel or members.

Explaining the court's decision on March 22, Judge Christoph Heydemann said the congregation did not have the right to refuse to open its books.

Neither Offenbergs nor the congregation's attorney, Raimund Koerner, have indicated whether or not they will appeal the court's decision. They do not need to do so until the court issues its ruling in writing, which will happen in April.

The spokesman said that neither Offenbergs nor Koerner appeared in the Berlin courtroom on March 22.

More than 20 000 Jews are estimated to live in Berlin today. Some 11 000 belong to the main community, which funds several synagogues across the denominational spectrum. There are also several independent congregations. (JTA)



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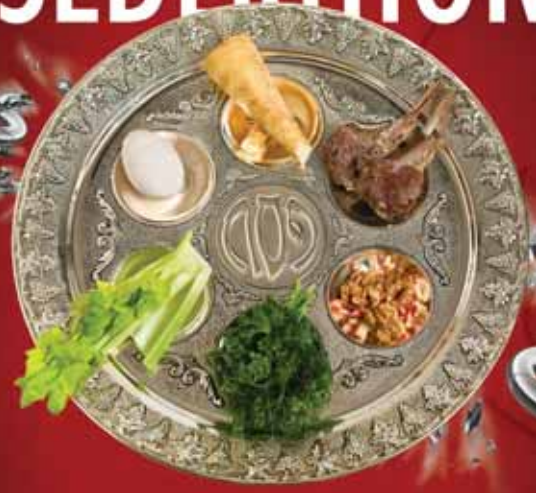
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# Bloch’s fundraising work a labour of love

*Her son’s illness and treatment at Red Cross Children’s Hospital, was an eye-opener to Amanda Bloch. The lack of basic facilities shocked her. She did not leave it at that; she did something about it and the changes wrought are tangible proof of her dedication and determination.*

**MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN  
PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW BROWN**

Philanthropist Amanda Bloch first came into the Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital’s orbit when her seven-month-old son, Zachary, was treated there for severe kidney failure in 2001.

Harbouring what she now describes as misconceptions about state hospitals, she says she “learned very quickly that no money or privilege could buy better care”.

## ‘I started to make lists on the back of Zachary’s chart.’

Zachary was initially unconscious and while keeping vigil at his bedside, Bloch began to take note of her surroundings. “I couldn’t handle the fact that there was such a glaring disparity between the circumstances in private care and state care (and that) in a place of excellence, there were Third World facilities,” she recalls.

“I started to make lists on the back of Zachary’s chart of the differences and what could be done to change that.” Bloch set

about speaking to the nursing staff, clinicians and patients, asking them what they would change about the way treatment was delivered.

“I turned those into wish lists, then turned the wish lists into plans. The only way I could think of to say thank you, was to make sure that no other parent had to go through what I went through in the circumstances I went through it,” she explains.

For a start, there were no curtains for privacy around the beds and the night her son was admitted, she remembers watching the child in the bed next door dying of liver disease while waiting for a transplant. The next night, a child on the other side died of the same disease her son had.

“I couldn’t understand why those parents weren’t afforded the dignity of curtains and a counselling room. Moms were told in the corridors that their children were dying.

“I couldn’t accept that just because you were indigent, you should be subjected to less dignified circumstances,” the UCT law graduate says.

First to receive her attention once her son’s life had been saved, was the unit he had been in, which was transformed into a



**Amanda Bloch (right) with curator Linda Givon at Bloch’s 2007 Art Auction Benefit for the Red Cross Children’s Hospital.**

new wing with funds that she raised. Next on the list was equipping a new trauma unit, then an oncology unit, building a family resource unit, raising money for a new operating theatre complex and, most recently, a burns unit.

## ‘I couldn’t understand why those parents weren’t afforded the dignity of curtains and a counselling room.’

In 2003, Bloch pioneered South Africa’s premier Art Auction Benefit which helps fund her work and has become so prestigious that the biennial event has a waiting list. Big-name

artists clamour to have their work included, thanks to the efforts of curator Linda Givon. Last year, R4,5 million was raised.

Educational projects are also within her ambit, particularly an exchange programme for paediatricians from the rest of Africa. Red Cross is the only dedicated children’s hospital in sub-Saharan Africa.

From a privileged background, Bloch says her son’s illness is “the greatest gift I have ever received. When Zachary got sick, it was as if somebody turned on stadium lights in my mind and I realised that not only had it been stagnant for so long, but my heart and soul (too).

“For a decade (this work) has brought meaning to my life.”

### Community Briefs

#### **ABRAHAMSON GOES MENTAL IN ARTS CENTRE**

SA mentalist Michael Abrahamson presents “Powerbrain: The Mentalist, Sequel” at the UJ Arts Centre, April 17-21.

Effectively, it uses mathematics, memory skills, body language, eye movement, psychological suggestion and other skills to influence specific courses of action. This makes for compelling entertainment.

Tickets at R160 are available at Computicket and also at the Theatre box office.

E-mail [info@powerbrain.co.za](mailto:info@powerbrain.co.za) or visit [www.powerbrain.co.za](http://www.powerbrain.co.za) for more details.

#### **AN APPEAL TO LEARN HATIKVAH AND TO SING IT**

LiveHatikva, founded by former South African Galia Albin, is an initiative to unite Jews worldwide on Yom Ha’atzmaut through the singing of Israel’s national anthem, Hatikvah.

Each year, it is hosted by a different global Jewish community. Now it’s SA’s turn. LiveHatikva appeals to schools, synagogues, youth groups; everyone, young and old to learn Hatikvah, and to digitally record yourselves singing it.

Send clips to [livehatikva2012@gmail.com](mailto:livehatikva2012@gmail.com) or post them onto LiveHatikva’s facebook page: [www.facebook.com/LiveHatikva2012SouthAfrica](http://www.facebook.com/LiveHatikva2012SouthAfrica) , by April 10.

#### **UJW APPEALS FOR VARIOUS ITEMS FOR THEIR CHARITIES**

Co-chairmen of the Union of Jewish Women, Lynne Raphaely and Shirley Ancer, are currently requesting clothing and shoes suitable for boys aged 6 to 16, to assist granny- and child-headed households.

They’re also seeking microwaves, a television, a toaster and a tape deck/CD player, suitable for playing Tape Aids for the Blind, to make the lives of some Kosher Mobile Meals recipients easier. Call (011) 648-1053.

#### **YOUNG WOMEN’S GROUP NEEDS ‘SPRUCE UP’ HELP**

Kelly Nathan, chairman of the Yocheved Young Women’s Group, Union of Jewish Women, appeals to readers for help in sprucing up communal areas of Our Parents Home, Norwood.

They’re seeking a projector and screen; new or used soft furnishings like scatter cushions, throws, lamps, paintings; 48 12-seater round tablecloths or fabric to make them; the wherewithal or skills to repair wooden card tables and leather upholstered furniture, or monetary donations.

Contact Kelly: [kelnathan@mweb.co.za](mailto:kelnathan@mweb.co.za) or 082-855-4132.

#### **BRAUDE DISCUSSES IDENTITY OF LITVAK JEWRY IN SA**

Last week, independent local scholar, Claudia Braude visited Aaron Lansky of the National Yiddish Book Centre in Amherst, Massachusetts. They spoke of the identity and texture of Litvak Jewry in SA.

She conveyed the notion of visiting the National Yiddish Book Centre as a kind of pilgrimage and the two spent time dissecting the food and politics of Litvish culture, speaking of Jewish political response to apartheid, from anecdotes about Nelson Mandela and Helen Suzman to acquiescence of the rabbinate.

Visit <http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/audio/south-african-jewish-experience> to hear the full 38 minute-long interview.

#### **‘BOYS FROM ASHES’ FOR THE GREENSIDE**

“The Boys from the Ashes”, a Holocaust three-hander, based on life of Vilna ghetto survivor Israel Gurwicz, grandfather of director/playwright Courtneigh Cloud, will be staged at The Greenside on April 25, 26 and 29. The play, written during Cloud’s fourth year in drama at Wits, has been staged in CT at the SA Holocaust Foundation and Great Park Shul. Talia Goldsmith, mother of one actress, will exhibit her Holocaust-redolent sculptures in the foyer. Tickets: R120 pp. Call Dorann: (011) 880-5720 or 082-958-7607.

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# OCD has become prevalent in Jewish community

*Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and anxiety have both become very prevalent issues in the Jewish community and South Africans of all ages and backgrounds, were suffering angst, unaware of how to treat the overwhelming mind games and compulsive behaviours that were commonly associated with OCD, behavioural therapist Kevin Bolon told a Chevrah Kadisha Social Services meeting recently.*

**SHIRA DRUION**

He told the audience of the pathology accompanied with OCD and the many ways that it manifested in those who suffer from it.

The Chevrah Kadisha Social Services provide a multitude of mental healthcare services to the wider Johannesburg Jewish community.

Inspiring guest speakers give generously of their time, knowledge and skills, to empower and challenge audiences, so that individuals, family members and the community can respond more effectively to the issues at hand.

**‘It’s a very debilitating and painful disorder.’**

In his talk Bolon explained: “There are a whole host of fears and anxieties with which people suffer, so in order to keep the anxiety at bay, people begin to use compulsiveness behaviour as the modus operandi to rid themselves of the repetitive and oppressing thought processes.

“It is a very debilitating and painful disorder, which can be helped with cognitive behavioural therapy which helps to reprogramme the brain’s thinking patterns. In more severe cases, it is necessary to apply a combination of CBT in conjunction with medication, so that patients can be relieved.”

Bolon elaborated on how the disorder is detected and explained how it differs from the pathology and behaviour that is associated with general anxiety. He said OCD patients were often tormented by repugnant thoughts which were grossly out of character.

Mothers who were gentle and loving, might be plagued by thoughts of hurting their children, despite the fact that they would never normally cause them pain in



any way, shape or form.

OCD can manifest in many shapes and forms. Bolon says the common compulsions usually include washing, checking, symmetrising, and touching. Patients can present with complaints of constant vigilance in the checking of stoves, ovens or car alarms, repetitive behaviours which can force sufferers to count

objects repeatedly, the constant washing of hands to avoid germs and many other pathological practices which cause victims to become dysfunctional in their day-to-day lives.

Says Bolon: “The behaviour may be observable or unobservable and is only considered pathological when it begins to interfere with, or impair patients’ time and lifestyle in any area of functioning: work, study, socially or emotionally.”

He says OCD can be detected in boys from late primary school age into adolescence, and in girls from late teens which is also often accompanied by mood swings. Trauma can set off patients who have a predisposition for OCD and that patients with a familial history, have a greater chance of being OCD sufferers.

**OCD can be detected in boys from an early age.**

He explained that OCD was otherwise known as the “Doubting Disease”, by causing people who are normally logical, to be plagued by thoughts which are illogical, painfully destructive and unrelenting.

He said the compulsive behaviour offered some respite, but the “driving thoughts are very crippling and often patients who come to see me have lives that have been turned upside down by the compulsion”.

• For more information contact Lara Noik: noiklara@jhbchev.co.za

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# Negotiating labour Issues

The challenge is rife for businesses to a) source the correct talent to enhance company profitability, and b) to retain that talent to maintain profitability and seek further growth.

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## Knowing how to pick

Research indicates that 60 – 70 per cent of all operating business costs are spent on salaries and/or wages. It goes without saying that staff cuts (assuming the company can function respectably) will increase turnover, but if this is the case, and profitability remains after the cuts - perhaps the original staff selection was made without the correct vision.

Pamela Maharaj, director of People and Change Solutions at PwC, believes reducing costs and lowering a company's headcount is not necessarily an indicator of long-term profitability - and not an ideal way to leverage talent. She advocates a holistic approach to talent identification, based on a 4 pillar methodology.

Pillar one - Align talent strategy to business objectives.

Pillar two - Current priorities based on the organisation's needs.

Pillar three - Maharaj says is focusing on target delivery. To recommend tailor-made business solutions, the following are taken into account: performance management, review and recognition, succession planning, leadership development and finally, culture and technology that support talent management.

Pillar four - Uniting HR services, processes and infrastructure.



Bryan Silke's  
**BusinessBrief**  
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## Retaining staff against the African demand

With neighbouring African countries on the receiving end of massive foreign direct investment, South African employers better be prepared for a possible staff exodus. As the majority of the projects are in the fields of energy, mining, transport, telecommunications and infrastructure, Sandra Burmeister cautions business owners that the staff likely to be enticed are skilled staff such as engineers, architects and IT specialists.

The statistics are weighty. With \$150 billion in projects expected to be spent over the next three years alone, more skilled resources are needed to be turned over locally, to prevent the cross-border movement from crippling our already scarce skilled resources, says Burmeister.

Unesco provides a bitter truth: There are more African engineers working in the US than there are collectively working in Africa! What is more threatening for domestic businesses, is that with communications infrastructure improving in more Northern African countries such as Kenya and Nigeria, international companies are relocating their head offices to these countries to be closer to their key markets including the United States and Europe.

South African employers need to be cognisant of our already local scarce skills pool being depleted by these global macro changes.

• For more information to read more from the above cited authors, please visit [www.bbrief.co.za](http://www.bbrief.co.za)



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RABBI BENJAMIN BLECH

I hate it when people try to put words into my mouth. That’s exactly what happened when I was invited, in the role of rabbinic expert, to address a class of public high school seniors on “The Most Important Message of the Jewish Holiday of Passover”.

Before I could say anything, the person in charge carried on effusively, telling the students how she was certain I would explain that Jews celebrate Passover as the biblical festival which glorifies freedom as the greatest of all human rights.

It is this concept, she enthusiastically went on, that guides us today as we live in a country that permits no limitations on our personal freedoms. We are free to do as we please, she suggested - all thanks to a Jewish holiday.

Then she finally introduced me and gave me the opportunity to disabuse her and the audience of an all too common misconception.

Of course, on one level, Passover deals with freedom. It is a holiday that commemorates the end of Jewish slavery and suffering. It reminds us from year-to-year that G-d hears the cries of the downtrodden, sensitive to the pain of the abused who seek relief from their cruel masters. Human beings are meant to be free from oppression by the wicked, from mistreatment by the callous, from subjugation by the stronger.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and that kind of restriction is something the A-mighty cannot countenance. “Let my people go”, were the words G-d put into the mouth of Moses as the first part of his plea for liberty for the children of Israel.

But there was more to that petition which we conveniently forget. And it is the last part of the biblical call for justice that forces us to rethink the parameters of freedom and the way in which our contemporary society has distorted its message.

It sounds great, at first blush, to say that everyone should be free to do whatever they like. The first time our children give voice to obscenities or speak to us disrespectfully with the argument that “it’s a free country”, we begin to recognise that freedom without limits is anarchy, and freedom without conscience is cruelty.

Free speech is curtailed when it presents a clear and present danger.

Societies quickly learn that no one can be totally free at the expense of other people’s rights. Freedom of speech is a fundamental right of American democracy. Nonetheless the Supreme Court has ruled that a few other public interests - national security, justice or personal safety - override freedom of speech.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, speaking for the unanimous Supreme Court, stated: “The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.”

The notion that “it’s a free country” is what caused a Rutgers University freshman to kill himself after two classmates used a hidden

# ‘Let my people go’ is only half the story

*There’s an all too common misconception about Pesach and what it means. Yes, on one level Pesach deals with freedom, but then we count the days to Shavuot. The two festivals are inextricably linked. The freedom of Passover must be wedded to the moral covenant of the Torah.*

dorm room camera to splash his sex life across the Internet.

Tyler Clementi, a renowned high school violinist, left his wallet on the George Washington Bridge before plunging to his death in the Hudson River after a Twitter post revealed sensitive details about his private life.

Freedoms misused may have tragic consequences. That is why Passover, known as the festival of freedom, is actually only half a holiday. From the very moment we celebrate liberation we count the days to the holiday of Shavuot, when the Jewish people stood at Mount Sinai and received the Torah.

The two festivals are inextricably linked. The first speaks of freedom from; the second freedom to. We were freed from physical servitude in order to voluntarily place ourselves under the restrictions of moral rectitude.

## Freedom without limits is anarchy and freedom without conscience is cruelty.

Freedom without any restraints may very well be just as destructive as slavery. “No one can ever tell me what to do” - an idea not limited by ethical constraints - is potentially just as much a threat to the social order as slave masters.

Freedom without restraints may be as destructive as slavery.

From a Jewish perspective, to speak only of the ideal of freedom - while ignoring its necessary partner of responsibility - is to pervert its true meaning.

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# Memories: How we define ourselves in the present

*The bridge to the past seemed not very far behind, but the bridge to the future appeared to be very far ahead, guest speaker, political analyst and research officer of the Helen Suzman Foundation, Aubrey Matshiqi, told a Union of Jewish Union meeting recently. This explained his topic, “Memories - Why a Bridge Too Far”.*



STAFF REPORTER

Matshiqi expressed concern at how memories of the past are being used in South Africa today, for and against people. The national conversation is clear about one thing, which is memory. It is seldom about the past but always about the present and always about what it is trying to achieve in

the present, he said. Memories are about how we define ourselves in the present. Matshiqi said people, as a group, embraced certain memories and then only those truths which defined them as a group and then often rejected the truths which defined others. “The question I ask is: When it comes

to history and collective memory, how is South Africa doing post apartheid? Do I, as a former black, oppressed victim, have the privilege of collective memories of apartheid over those of others?” This “process of my memory”, he said, was the source of much conflicts and tension in the country today. “The tension is caused by the competi-

tion for resources and makes it difficult for reconciliation purposes. When dealing with those who oppress you, they too, have the right to demand human respect,” he said. What does one say to a 21-year-old white boy who doesn’t qualify for a job because of affirmative action? The boy, says he was not there and not responsible. How do we deal with this bridge from the past to the future?

“The funny thing about memories is that I believe I am entitled to memories of oppression even though I wasn’t there. If it is good to remember, as people say, what is good about it?” he asks.

People say it is to create a better world and to learn from mistakes of the past. “But, history has proved that we learn nothing from it - except to learn to repeat things and that scares me,” he said.

Matshiqi said he was shocked in 2008, during the xenophobic riots when he saw local black youths laughing at the sight of a man being burned to death because he was from Mozambique and “not one of them”.

“These children had memories passed on to them about the evil of apartheid, but the same children can watch death happening in front of them and laugh. Do we learn anything from history? We learn nothing from it. Some have the potential and capacity to stand up when there are signs of evil being perpetrated, while others do not,” he says.

Matshiqi says he gets angry when commentators say blacks cannot be racist. It is not true; that is a denial of humanity.

“If I am human, I have the capacity of good and evil and that makes me a full component of humanity.”

Speaking about memories in politics, Matshiqi said these were used in political campaigns for votes. In the last elections in May this year, President Jacob Zuma used them for his election campaign.

“I listened and was saddened by Zuma who said that people who voted for the Democratic Alliance wanted to take the country back to the old days of apartheid. The ANC was playing the ‘DA gevaar’ card. Helen Zille, on the other hand, used apartheid memories in her campaign, encouraging people never to forget,” he said.

Matshiqi said he was disappointed to see the leaders of the ANC and DA moving in opposite directions on this.

He also criticised Zuma for saying that if people didn’t vote ANC, they would not go to heaven. This caused a lot of anger and accusations of blasphemy. “Do I need to die to get a better life?” he asks.

If you remembered things selectively for the wrong reason, it was the same as forgetting for the wrong reasons, he said.

If those who benefited from apartheid wished the country was affected by amnesia, it was the same as remembering for opportunism.

“Therefore, the challenge is to accept that reconciliation happens in the gap between reality and aspirations. We are afraid of conflict, which can be destructive. But, if we embrace conflict, we have a future.

“I am not satisfied that the rainbow nation of races exists – it has to be a rainbow of nations of Africans collectively, including homosexuals being able to walk the streets freely with blacks and whites who all have a sense of belonging,” he said.



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# Let’s play the ‘assume’ game

*There’s an inherent inability by participants to engage in any measure of rational debate about Israel and the Palestinians. For many of those not open to rational debate, naïveté, hatred, arrogance, and left-wing attitudes produce a discourse that must be shouted down rather than rationally resisted with fact and reasoned argument.*

OVER THE past few weeks I have been struck even more forcibly by the inability of participants to engage in any measure of rational debate about the dilemmas confronting Israel and the Palestinians.

Take for example the so-called Anti-Apartheid Week devoted to tarring Israel with the apartheid brush. The motivation does not concern a genuine search for reconciliation of the legitimate interests of both parties, but is exclusively devoted to the arrival at the tendentious conclusion that Israel is an apartheid state, thus constituting a crime against humanity and that it should be denied legal recognition in international law.

Let us leave aside the factual amnesia inherent in this exercise in hatred. It took place at the very time when thousands of Syrians were being butchered by the Assad regime in an exercise of sustained brutality that cries out to all decent people to lift up their voices and cry out in sustained protest.

**It (resistance to rational debate) is also sourced in an understandable fear of motivations of those who seek destruction of Israel**

Nothing exposes the bad faith of those who criticise Israel more than their silence about Syrian crimes against humanity.

On the opposite side, there is a similar resistance to rational debate, save that I suspect in this case it is sourced in an understandable fear of the motivations of those who seek the destruction of the State of Israel.

But as much as this fear is rooted in a collective psyche, itself shaped by the vicissitudes of Jewish history, it sadly prevents any rational engagement about a dilemma that is not going to disappear.

To give a tangible example: Peter Beinart, an important Jewish intellectual in the United States, recently wrote an op-ed in the New York Times concerning the manner in which the increased settlements on the West Bank have eroded the democratic character of Israel, so much so, in his view, that the very future of Israel is threatened if this set of policies continues.

Thus, controversially, he suggests that those committed to a viable, democratic Israel should both defend Israel’s right to exist in peace, as well as boycotting products made by settlements on the West Bank, in order to persuade Israel to move from what he considers is a disastrous course of action. Doubtless and understandably, this approach will elicit vituperative reaction.

What distinguishes Beinart, however, from the usual BDS advocates, is that he is committed to a Jewish state, is prepared to defend its rights, while arguing that the relentless process of further settlement constitutes a serious long-term threat to his vision of a prosperous and democratic Israel.



**The Jury is out**  
Dennis Davis

The point of discussing Beinart’s article is not to deal at this stage with the predictable reaction which can be summarised thus: he is either a self-hater, or a naïve leftist who offers succour to our enemies, or sufficiently arrogant to insist that Zionism must invariably take on a liberal form. This kind of reaction which I tested earlier among a number of people who crop up in these pages on a regular basis, closes off all form of debate.

For them naïveté, hatred, arrogance, left-wing attitudes produce a discourse that must be shouted down rather than rationally resisted with fact and reasoned argument.

With these two camps the only ones running the discourse, it is small wonder that debate based upon reason which in turn could produce some form of sensible reaction to a dilemma of reconciliation of two legitimate sets of claims that are at the heart of the Middle East impasse, has proved impossible.

This depressing conclusion that shouting but no debate, is the mode of engagement, made me wonder what a debate would look like if we started from the Rawlsian original position. John Rawls, arguably the most influential political philosopher of the past 50 years, constructed the idea of the original position to fashion his idea of justice.

Applied to the problem of the Middle East, it would work as follows: Let’s assume that each of us who participates in these debates, particularly Israelis and Palestinians, did not know whether we would be born Jewish, Muslim or Christian, in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramallah, Gaza City, Cape Town or Johannesburg; let’s assume further that we did not know our social or economic station, level of education, or whether we were secular or religious.

**This depressing conclusion that shouting but no debate, is the mode of engagement...**

Given this level of uncertainty about our identity, stake in society or religious or political views, how would we respond to the continued struggle by Israel for peace and Palestinians for a state? I very much doubt that we would come out in favour of terror, suicide bombs, oppression by security forces, denial of property rights or a moral duplicity whereby we boycott Israel, but remain silent about Syria.

My conception of justice in this context must await another column. In the meantime, I look forward to your conceptions in the hope of reasoned debate.



**Peter Beinart, who has called for a boycott of West Bank goods, meets students at the J Street national conference in February 2011 in this file photo. Beinart is due to be a keynote speaker at his year’s conference by J Street at the end of the month.**

## Not many takers for Beinart’s call for ‘Zionist BDS’

**RON KAMPEAS**  
**WASHINGTON**

Should Jews shun other Jews? And should they shun Jews who call on Jews to shun other Jews?

Peter Beinart’s call in last week Monday’s New York Times for a boycott of goods manufactured in West Bank settlements, has reignited a debate not just about what works and doesn’t, when it comes to advancing a two-state solution, but also about what should and should not be said during the debate.

**Beinart tried to cast his call in pro-Israel terms**

Beinart, a journalist and essayist whose book, “The Crisis of Zionism,” is about to come out, tried to cast his call in pro-Israel terms.

“If Israel makes the occupation permanent and Zionism ceases to be a democratic project, Israel’s foes will eventually overthrow Zionism itself,” he wrote.

Beinart referred to his boycott proposal as “Zionist BDS” - a play on the pro-Palestinian boycott, divestment and sanctions movement targeting all of Israel, which Beinart firmly condemned in his Times essay as an effort to dismantle the Jewish State.

The pushback was immediate and came from multiple camps in the Israel debate: those who rejected Beinart’s thesis but sought to engage him and those who think his latest call places him beyond the pale. More pushback came from advocates of a broader boycott movement targeting all of Israel.

Beinart has been a high-profile figure in the debates over Israel ever since he penned a much-discussed 2010 essay in The New York Review of Books suggesting that what he depicted as an Israeli slide away from democratic values, would alienate American Jewish youth. The essay won him plaudits from the pro-Israel left.

Beinart is scheduled to be a featured speaker at this week’s J Street national conference. But even the dovish J Street was cool to his boycott proposal. Its president, Jeremy Ben-Ami, said that boycotting settlements was unlikely to yield positive results. “We favour a border not a boycott - we want to get the political process going to arrive at a border,” he said.

Ben-Ami hastened to note, however, that the idea of boycotting settlements was not out of place in the Israeli discourse. Another J Street conference keynoter, he noted, was Amos Oz, the widely respected Israeli novelist who has signed onto a letter supporting Israeli artists who refuse to perform in the West Bank settlement of Ariel.

“It’s a legitimate point of view that a lot of passionate two-state Zionists share,” Ben-Ami said. “And Peter is within the mainstream in Israel.”

Seth Mandel, writing on the Contentions blog at the conservative Commentary magazine, assailed Beinart’s boycott proposal as well as his labelling of Israel proper as “democratic Israel” and Israeli settlements as “nondemocratic Israel.” Mandel called these arguments “both morally reprehensible and a dangerous slippery slope”.

“The slippery slope, of course, is that the ‘legitimate’ vs ‘illegitimate’ argument will immediately be applied to those, anywhere and anytime, who voice any support for the Jews Beinart says to stay away from,” Mandel wrote.

Jeffrey Goldberg, a writer for The Atlantic who also has harshly criticised the West Bank settlement enterprise, chose the path of engagement, parrying with Beinart in a much-watched exchange on Twitter.

“What’s your alternative for stopping the settlement growth that dooms Israeli democracy?” Beinart asked Goldberg.

Goldberg replied: “Longer discussion, but int’l boycott will only make mainstream Israelis more sympathetic to settlers, not less.”

Centrist Jewish groups were critical of Beinart’s proposal.

“I don’t think a JCRC would support any organisation that would support any kind of activity that would bring any harm to a segment of Israel,” said Ronald Halber, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington.

Halber said he did not think Beinart would become a pariah in the Jewish community, arguing that it “sounds like he wrote the piece more to start a discussion than advance the proposal”.

He added: “I find it a less than serious proposal from a person I consider thoughtful.”

David Harris, the American Jewish Committee’s executive director, said that questions of whether Beinart was in or out of the discussion, were rendered moot by the welcome Beinart received in venues like the pages of The New York Times - and that meant he would continue to score speaking gigs from Jewish groups.

“Peter Beinart is not knocking at a proverbial tent; Peter Beinart has been let in by the New York Times,” he said. “I only wish he were as open to some of the ideas of the hosting Jewish institutions as they are to hearing his thoughts.”

**“I find it a less than serious proposal from a person I consider thoughtful.”**

Abraham Foxman, the Anti-Defamation League’s national director, said that Beinart’s proposal would alienate Israelis and so violated a basic tenet of first heeding what another Jewish community was considering before recommending action.

“We don’t have the Palestinians, and with a campaign like this you won’t have the Israelis - that’s a great accomplishment towards peace,” Foxman said sarcastically.

One Jewish group, however, has taken a similar line to Beinart. Americans for Peace Now, which is a member of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations, announced its backing for settlement boycotts last July.

The debate is sure to continue, if only because Beinart was stoking it at the virtual meeting place he hosts at the Daily Beast/Newsweek. The newly launched blog, called Zion Square, has assembled an array of prominent contributors, predominantly hailing from the left of the political spectrum.

One of Zion Square’s writers, Raphael Magarik, chided those who said Jews boycotting Jews should be out of bounds, and noted that such actions had been commonplace throughout Jewish history.

“To cut from our playbook the best tactic Jews have for censuring other Jews, a tactic that dates at least to the Talmud and has as its targets the likes of Leon Trotsky, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, and Baruch Spinoza - well, that’s what I call painful and unnatural,” he wrote. (JTA)



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chag sameach

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# A more formalised process of dialogue

On Sunday, the senior leadership and professional staff of the Board and the SA Zionist Federation held a half-day symposium at Beyachad to discuss their respective roles and current and future working relationship.

This resulted in a lively, constructive discussion and will hopefully mark the beginning of a more formalised process of dialogue between our two organisations. It was very useful to identify where functions are distinct and where they overlap, and in the latter cases to address what we need to do to manage the integration process.

For well over a century, the SAJBD and the SAZF have been the two premier communal organisations

serving the South African Jewish community. Both are national umbrella bodies with a broad affiliation base that gives them a mandate to act as the representative voice of SA Jewry in their respective spheres of activity.

Until quite recently, it was fairly clear-cut where the boundaries between those spheres lay. In summary, the SAJBD dealt with issues specifically pertaining to the safety and well-being of the local Jewish community while the SAZF oversaw all aspects of the community's relationship with Israel.

Thus, within the Board's mandate fall such matters as fighting anti-Semitism, safeguarding Jewish civil and religious rights, preserving and promoting

the local Jewish heritage, fostering harmonious relations between Jews and the wider society and representing the community both to government and on international platforms.

The Federation's role includes promoting such Israel-related activities as aliyah fundraising, youth movements, Maccabi Zionist education, communal events such as Yom Ha'atzmaut, and representation on international Zionist platforms.

Essentially, for most of their history the two organisations have fulfilled parallel functions. Certainly, there has been a strong "sisterly" bond between them, including each being represented on the other's managing committees, but generally speaking each had its own particular sphere of authority and such boundaries were always recognised and respected.

To an extent, this has changed somewhat since the turn of the century. The Board has had to become involved in activities on behalf of Israel, specifically in helping counter the rising tide of radical anti-Israel activism that now confronts us on virtually a daily basis.

## The SAJBD and the SAZF are the two premier communal organisations serving the SA Jewish community.

The rationale behind this is that SA Jewry is overwhelmingly a Zionist community, hence constant attacks on Israel negatively impact on the morale, image and even physical safety of its members.

As such, in terms of its own mandate, the Board is obligated to become involved in the area of defending Israel, and this we have done, always, of course, in close consultation and often in direct partnership with the SAZF. The magnitude of the task confronting us is in any case too great for any single organisation to take on by itself, and we must always remember that the SAZF also does not have at its disposal the kind of resources it could call upon in the past.

Given the reality that our organisations will in the foreseeable future have to remain involved in countering anti-Israel activities, it is vital that we constantly communicate with one another, share skills and resources where possible, avoid duplication of activities and ensure that the message we put out is clear and consistent.

To this end, we see our Sunday symposium as a necessary step forward in what needs to be a continuing process of consultation, exchanging of ideas, pooling of information and in general of ensuring that the resources of the Jewish community are brought to bear in the most effective way when meeting the challenge.



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# Delightful children’s fare sets a high standard



The kids, Joey (Jesse Newman) and Mowgli (Karabo Oberem) get down to business, while the grownups, Bagheera the panther (Thabiso Tshabalala) and Baloo the bear (Sean McGrath) discuss the future. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VIVID IMAGES)

**REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN**

It’s time again for your kids to be in theatre; plays at Johannesburg’s two children’s theatres deal with the socially complicated topic of death, in a manner so lively, unpatronising and relevant, that, be it in the jungles of India or on a pig farm in America’s south, never lose their storytelling edge, or their sense of heart.

At the People’s Theatre, Disney’s ‘The Jungle Book Kids’ ends April 15; at the National Children’s Theatre, ‘Charlotte’s Web’ ends April 14.

Crisscrossed by thick veins of swing, Rudyard Kipling’s Jungle Book was interpreted thus by Walt Disney in 1968. While it may seem odd to model a live show on cartoon, as soon as Louie Prima’s jungle song rumbles to life in the overture, the audience is rapt.

**Tale of a foundling nurtured to boyhood by wolves.**

It’s the tale of a foundling nurtured to boyhood by wolves, and the dilemma of what happens when that boy becomes a man. The answer arrived at, amid a mix of colonial savvy and an index of socio-historical values, by way of

elephants with war medals and monkeys expostulating on jazz, supported by a clever unpatronising script that includes witty hypocritical banter between sworn enemies, is that Mowgli must leave the jungle.

The vicious presence of Shere Khan the tiger focuses urgency in the decision; a girlish stranger eases the burden, making animal tears flow.

It’s a poignant tale well told, in this busy set with jungle depth by Marius Boshoff and Grant Knottenbelt. While the choreography is jagged at times, and the snake Kaa’s costume slips over poor Sebe Leotlela’s face because of ill fit, the kids steal the show.

They’ve been superbly trained: the ubiquitously itchy monkey troupe, Joey the baby elephant (Jesse Newman (7)), and Mowgli, (Karabo Oberem (10)) are just delicious.

You might never have encountered a piglet in your life; chances are you have known and loved a puppy. The interpretation that young Durban-born actress Nomonde Matiwane lends piglet Wilbur, central character in EB White’s “Charlotte’s Web” overreaches all the National Children’s Theatre’s previous Wilburs in acuity and in cuteness.

You quickly lose the under-



True friends indeed: Charlotte the spider (Brenda Mukwevho) and Wilbur the pig (Nomonde Matiwane). (PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG DA SILVA)

standing that this is a young woman dressed in a funny hat, striped dungarees and pink leggings, and get so attuned to the idea of pigness, you’re consumed in this poignant, never blunt, contemplation of friendship, first published in 1952.

**It’s a poignant tale, well told.**

Similarly, brilliant casting is afoot with Charlotte the spider. Brenda Mukwevho, originally from Limpopo has considerable kudos under her belt. She played Lufuno in local soapie Muvhango, for five years, before switching to a directorial role.

She lends Charlotte a doleful sincerity and motherliness that give flesh and blood to her selfless connection with a young pig, upon which this beautiful tale is premised. You too will wish you had a friend who was as good a writer as Charlotte.

Supported by an able and energised young cast, even more freshness is injected into this show, with choreography by Shelley Adriaanzen that’s crisp and springy and contagious in its sense of joy.

There’s a tweak here and there to detail, small nuances that breathe lovely life into a show that’s seen many summers.

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# KDS boys swing their racquets with abandon

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY ARNALDO MANDEL

King David Sandton’s A tennis team was invited to join top tennis teams from all over the country to play in the Sun City Invitational National Schools Tournament from Monday February 20 to Friday 24.

The boys, who were ranked last, played with heart and determination and reached the semi-finals. Although they did not progress to the finals, they came third and made our school very proud.



Louis van Huyssteen (our resident King David Sandton coach); Michael Meyer; Sam Brozin; Jessie Nathan; Joshua Hertz; Jacob Miltz; and Gary Meyer (team manager).



## Chess afternoon in memory of Hirschy Pearson

OWN CORRESPONDENT  
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

On Monday March 19, the inaugural Hirschy Pearson Memorial Chess Day was held in memory of the late Hirschy Pearson who passed away in 2011.

Hirschy Pearson was well known to many people and dedicated over three decades to Yeshiva College and Gauteng chess.

In a festival day, learners from Yeshiva,

Torah Academy, Hirsch Lyons and the three King David schools, got together and had a wonderful afternoon of chess with great spirit being showed by all the schools.

This will become a regular Inter Jewish event, becoming a tournament from next year. Well done to all schools for superb participation.

Pictured are learners from the schools in round one of the Hirschy Pearson Memorial Chess Day.

# Minnie Bersohn tots fascinated by Reptile Farm



ALLISON RUBIN  
PHOTOGRAPH:  
MICHELLE VINOKUR

The children at Minnie Bersohn Pre-Primary School were visited by the Reptile Farm and were exposed to all different kinds of reptiles, such as lizards, snakes and tortoises.

They were fascinated with all that they saw and gained knowledge through this experience.

Pictured are Aimee Sidersky; Jayden Frank; and Shea Joffe.

## KDHSVP quiz stars visit Israeli Embassy

OWN CORRESPONDENT  
PHOTOGRAPH: HANNA BEN-MOSHE

Four King David High School Victory Park learners were finalists in the Israel Quiz 2011. To mark this special occasion, they were invited by the Ambassador of Israel,

Dov Segev-Steinberg, to visit the Israeli Embassy.

Pictured are Jacob Blou (5th place); Saul Maserow (1st place and winner); Israeli Ambassador Dov Segev-Steinberg; Oren Benguri-Karstaedt (2nd place); and Ilan Malkin (3rd place); at the Israeli Embassy.



## Young Paul is now an SA chess champion

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY  
STELLA LAZARUS

Paul Gluckman, a grade 4 learner at Herzlia Constantia, Cape Town, played in the South African under-10 championships in Port Elizabeth last December. This tournament saw 86 of the very best under-10 players from around the country, competing.

Gluckman was seeded third going into the tournament based on past results. He finished on eight points out of a possible nine (seven wins and two draws) to emerge the clear winner, and now holds the title of South African under-10 Open Champion.

This win means that Gluckman qualifies to represent South Africa in the African Youth under-10 championships that will take place towards the end of the year. In this event he will compete against his country-winner counterparts from all the African countries.



Paul Gluckman, a grade 4 Herzlia Constantia learner, played against former No 1 World Chess Grande Master, Garry Kasparov, who visited South Africa recently.

Our chess team went with coach Paul to Mew Way in Khayelitsha to watch the former World Chess Grand Master Garry Kasparov, play and to support Gluckman, who was one of 26 chess champions playing simultaneously against Kasparov.

## Young KDVPPTS learners show their talent

STACY FLEISHMAN  
PHOTOGRAPH: SANDRA HIRSCH

King David Victory Park Primary School’s annual music evening was held on Thursday March 15, in the school hall.

This year’s theme was the “Phantom”. All grade 1 to 7 children were given the opportunity to showcase their talent in dancing, vocal and instruments.

The children practised hard under the guidance of Music Teacher C J Lottering. The evening was a resounding success.



Mikaila Sher.



Gabriel Wolfson.



Lauren Hirsch.



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A HOST MORE REASONS FOR JEWISH PTSD

Rabbi Michael Lerner (SAJR March 23) writing about a segment of the Israeli population who desire to carry out a pre-emptive strike against Iran's nuclear facility, says that “...they were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They were seeing events primarily through the framework of Auschwitz, the Holocaust and the suffering of our life in exile.”

Nowhere does he mention that they could be suffering from PTSD as a result of a series of wars against Arab neighbours: 1) The War of Independence, 1948; 2) The Six Day War, a pre-emptive strike against arms build up and threatening statements by Abdel Nasser; 3) The Yom Kippur War, in spite of a United Nations presence; 4) Continuous random rocket fire from Gaza.

I do agree with Rabbi Lerner, that if Israel does carry out a pre-emptive strike, this will be a signal for an Al-Qaida-style organisations to attack Jewish targets throughout the world. We will all be in the frontline.

John Brenner, Cyrildene, Johannesburg

NO POSITIVE RESULT CAN COME FROM BASHING PAST LEADERS

In response to the editorial in the Jewish Report of March 23 regarding the Toulouse attack: I think the right response to such attacks should be by calling for real peace, truth and reconciliation between ethnic groups in South Africa.

I also think people should speak more about the importance of agriculture and of Boer/Afrikaner farmers to it. I definitely can't see any productive result in bashing former governments, or attributing ideas to them which had not been theirs.

For example, I know that Dr D F Malan didn't have a maid in his house, and that was a principle of his. I also know (I saw it in a video clip) that Dr Hendrik Verwoerd described the idea of his views as “peaceful co-existence between neighbours”.

In any case, the point is that they didn't seem to have any intention of degrading any ethnic group or nation, and in any case, I fail to see any positive result from people bashing them.

There are many people who others can talk positively about, which may produce positive results.

Avner Eliyahu Romm, Sea Point, Cape Town

For the record

MORE ON CHONI G'S SUCCESS IN NEW YORK

In a community brief in last week's paper, Robyn Sassen wrote about Choni Goldman winning the Jewish Star at Brooklyn College, New York. It kicks off: “Last week Choni Goldman...” It should've read: “This week Monday...”

To give more information on the event: 2 500 attended the Brooklyn event which was an international competition where they had over 500 000 votes and more than 115 contestants - and South Africa won!

Goldman is going to California to sing in a Telethon on TV with Hollywood actors, to raise money for drug rehabilitation in California. (He has not yet gone as is mentioned in the brief). The Telethon is only in two months' time.

He arrived back in South Africa last week Tuesday after the Monday night production, as he had a wedding on Wednesday at Oakfield Farm.

Choni even featured on Israeli news and in Arutz Sheva as well.

THE CREEPIEST COMMENT ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND SUPERIORITY

David Saks has a habit of revealing some of what is most distressing about the Jewish religious community and the incestuous inward looking tendencies that, I believe, will turn Jewish communities into small, insignificant, tribal environments whose role and contribution to the world become irrelevant.

I was offended to my core by his article “Trying to escape an all-pervasive impunity” (SAJR February 10). The March 23 edition raises some of those issues again, but Saks is not alone in this.

He writes: “From personal experience, I understand better than most why Jews are meant to keep themselves as much as possible apart from the rest of humanity. It is not because we ‘dislike the goyim’ and look down on them, but rather it is the opposite.

“It is because we feel a natural attraction to the other nations, as fellow beings created B'tzelem Elokim, that we need to keep our distance, lest we be distracted from carrying out our particular mission.

“The more we mix at a social level with non-Jews, the more we will be influenced by their behaviour and modes of thinking, to the inevitable detriment of living lives wholeheartedly devoted to what the Torah demands.”

I would like to know what Saks' “personal experience” was so that we can debate properly his responses.

This paragraph reflects the creepiest comment on social exclusion and superiority that I have ever read. I am not going to win an argument with people who believe that strict adherence to the Torah is all that life on earth is worth.

Since I don't hold with this view, I point out that much of the exclusionary superiority complex on display here, is reflected identically by the fundamentalist Muslim world. Neither grouping has contributed positively to the world around us but, clearly, that is precisely the idea.

To fight against our “natural attraction to other nations” is an idea so repellent and obscene that the Jewish community whose only communion is with itself and G-d, should embark on a close introspection and wonder whether there is any point to a life like this.

I sympathise with the heartfelt, if somewhat intemperate views of letter writer Yossi Bogacz. I suspect his articulation is marred by the fact that his first language may not be English.

Mary Kluk's article in the same edition reveals the same self-centredness. She talks about the fact that the killings in France are a hate crime, reflected by the fact of the singling out of Jewish children.

I agree. It was a hate crime. To shoot children in the head at point blank range suggests unspeakable hatred. But to gloss over the killing of the soldiers who, by all accounts were Muslim and then beseech world Jewry to heed the wake-up call, looks parochial and loses an opportunity to make cause with other people and better strengthen our relationships with them.

Jews always have to be alert. The French response to the killings was appropriate and profound – something we are not all that familiar with when Jews are killed. But the SAJBD chairman encourages us to look inward, instead of strengthening our own resolve and getting the support and solidarity of others.

The same issue reports the marches against the killings comprising Jews, youth and politicians and refers to a banner reading: “In France, Blacks, Jews and Arabs are killed”. We lose opportunities through our self-obsession. And thereby weaken ourselves.

Sara Weiss, Parktown North, Johannesburg

CHRISTINE WALTERS SHOULD'VE DONE DUE DILIGENCE

Regarding the article in Jewish Report: “The fight for the closure of the Baal Shem Tov Shul is not over”, just the following comment to (Councillor) Christine Walters (who objects to the shul's existence): Caveat emptor. It's too late to complain now - you should have done your due diligence before you purchased!

Arnold Levy, Glenhazel, Johannesburg

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# Language and the brain

*A study that examined the division of labour between the two sides of the brain during the reading of different languages found that brain processing involvement in the decoding of Arabic was different to the involvement in reading Hebrew and English, which makes learning Arabic more challenging.*

HAIFA - Readers whose mother tongue is Arabic have more challenges reading in Arabic than native Hebrew or English speakers have reading their native languages, because the two halves of the brain divide the labour differently when the brain processes Arabic than when it processes Hebrew or English.

That is the result of a new study conducted by two University of Haifa researchers, Dr Raphiq Ibrahim of the Edmond J Safra Brain Research Centre for the Study of Learning Disabilities and the Learning Disabilities Department, and Prof Zohar Eviatar of the Department of Psychology.

"It emerges that the contribution of the two halves of the brain to processing written language depends on the graphic and linguistic structure of these languages," noted Dr Ibrahim.

### Two experiments were conducted with subjects divided into three groups.

The two halves of the brain, called hemispheres, govern different types of activities: The right hemisphere specialises more in processing spatial tasks and the holistic (pattern) processing of messages, while the left hemisphere is responsible for processing verbal messages and local processing of messages.

In order to examine the interaction between the two hemispheres while reading Hebrew, English and Arabic, two experiments were conducted with subjects divided into three groups: those with Arabic as their mother tongue, those with English as their mother tongue and those with Hebrew as their mother tongue. Each group was tested in their native language.

In the first experiment, words and pseudowords (strings of letters that have no literal meaning) were presented on a screen, and the subjects were asked to figure out whether the

stimulus was a real word; their response time, accuracy, and sensitivity were measured with every key pressed.

In the second experiment, the subjects were presented with various words on the right or the left side of the screen, which directs the information to be processed by the opposite hemisphere (that is, when the proper or nonsense word is screened on the right side of the screen, it will be processed by the left side of the brain, and vice versa, a stage called "unilateral").

The various words were then shown on both sides of the screen, while under the target word there was a symbol that indicated that this was the word that they should treat, while the other stimulus appeared on the other side of the screen in order to distract the brain processing (this stage is called "bilateral").

A comparison of both experiments establishes the degree of interaction between the two hemispheres during the brain's processing of the language being checked.

The results show that for readers of Hebrew and English, both hemispheres of the brain are independently involved in the task of reading, such that neither side is dependent on the other. By contrast, for the Arabic readers, it emerged that the right hemisphere was not able to function independently in the reading assignments without using the resources of the left hemisphere.

According to Dr Ibrahim, the significance of the findings is that despite the similarities between Arabic and Hebrew, when reading the former the right brain can't function independently and the cognitive burden becomes especially heavy, making it more difficult to read the language, even for those whose mother tongue is Arabic.

"This proves that the Arabic language doesn't behave like other languages when it comes to anything connected with decoding its graphic symbols," said Dr Ibrahim.

"The study's results show once again that on the word reading level the structural shape of Arabic orthography, that is, the graphic contours of the written language, activates the cognitive system differently.

"Thus, the question is again raised as to whether in the modern world those who speak certain languages have an advantage over those who speak other languages; and the role of pedagogy in improving reading skills among regular readers and those having difficulty is brought once again to the fore."

### News in brief

#### OBAMA: TIME RUNNING OUT FOR IRAN TALKS

WASHINGTON - Time is running out for a diplomatic solution to the dispute over Iran's nuclear programme, President Barack Obama said last Sunday.

"I believe there is a window of time to solve this diplomatically, but that window is closing," Obama told reporters after discussing Iran with Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan in Seoul, which is hosting a nuclear security summit this week.

Iran has said it is open to new negotiations with world powers about its nuclear programme, which the Islamic Republic insists is peace-

ful despite international suspicions that it has secret military designs.


Israel has made a veiled threat to attack Iran pre-emptively if it deems diplomacy a dead end. Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor said that Israel insisted the new negotiations stopped Iran's uranium enrichment, remove its stocks of the potential bomb fuel and dismantled its fortified enrichment plant near Qom. Iran has ruled out such conditions.

Meridor, speaking last Saturday to Israel's Channel Two television, voiced cautious optimism in the prospects for US-led diplomatic

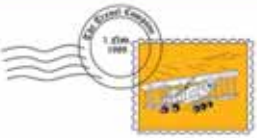
pressure on Tehran. He declined to discuss an Israeli military option, saying such talk inadvertently helped the Iranians by driving up the price of the oil they export.

Meridor did, however, sound encouraged by Obama's recent statement about US resolve to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons.



"He said for the first time that he is taking a military option into account," Meridor said. "In other words, he ruled it in, after (previously saying) he doesn't rule it out." (JTA)



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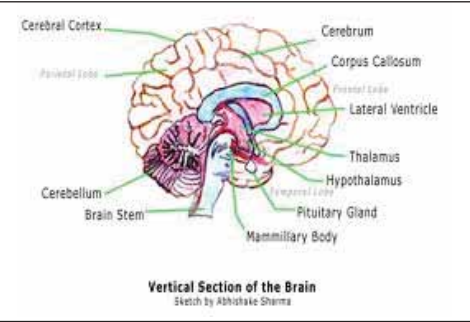
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NOTICES

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**VIVIAN RUBIN**  
The Rubin family would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our family, friends, rabbonim and organisations, for their support on the passing of my beloved husband, father of Russel, Gary, Lara and families. Your support has been a great source of comfort to us, knowing his memory will be cherished by all who knew him.

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News in brief

**KNESSET LAW BANS UNDERWEIGHT MODELS**  
JERUSALEM - Israel's Knesset approved a bill that would ban the use of underweight models in advertising.  
The measure passed last week Monday night also requires that any ad digitally altered to make a model look thinner must say so in the advertisement.  
Kadima Party lawmaker Rachel Adatto, a doctor who specialises in health issues among young women, authored the bill. The idea is to prevent young people from aspiring unhealthily toward impossible body-image goals.  
According to the law, models with a Body Mass Index below 18,5 would be prohibited from appearing in advertisements.  
"This law will send a message to teenagers that being thin is acceptable, but slimness has its limits, and there is such a thing as too thin," Ynet quoted Adatto as saying after the law was passed.  
The Likud's Danny Danon, who proposed the bill with Adatto, called the measure a "knockout in the war against anorexia".  
Danon said he was contacted about the law by members of the US Congress who are considering promoting a similar law, according to Ynet. (JTA)

SUPREME COURT RULES FEDERAL COURTS CAN CONSIDER JERUSALEM PASSPORT ISSUE

WASHINGTON - The US Supreme Court has returned to the lower courts the issue of whether Americans born in Jerusalem may list "Israel" on their passports - a ruling that drew praise from Jewish groups.  
The decision delivered on Monday was a success for the family of Jerusalem-born boy Menachem Zivotofsky. His family for years has sought to force the State Department to agree to state on his passport that he was born in Israel, citing a law passed by Congress in 2002.  
President George W Bush signed the law, but in doing so refused to implement it, citing executive prerogative in foreign policy. President Barack Obama has continued that practice.  
The Supreme Court, in an 8-1 decision, overruled lower court decisions that had contended that the judicial branch did not have authority over this area since it was not the courts' place to determine foreign policy.  
"The courts are fully capable of determining whether this statute may be given effect, or instead must be struck down in light of authority conferred on the Executive by the Constitution," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the majority. Justice Stephen Breyer dissented.  
Most national Jewish groups backed the Zivotofskys, with many submitting friend of the court briefs on their behalf. Among the first groups to welcome the latest decision was the Orthodox Union.  
"With the ruling by the high court, Congressional policy on Jerusalem, ignored by successive Administrations, will get its day in court," the OU said in a statement. (JTA)

FRANKFURT ELECTS FIRST JEWISH MAYOR SINCE 1933

BERLIN - The German city of Frankfurt has elected its first Jewish mayor since 1933 and only its second in history.  
In elections held last Sunday, Peter Feldmann, a 53-year-old economist and political scientist, won with 57 per cent of the vote - surprising even himself, according to news reports. The Social Democrat will succeed Petra Roth of the conservative Christian Democratic Union.  
Feldmann, the former head of a home for seniors, takes the helm of a city with some 650 000 inhabitants and Germany's fourth-largest Jewish population.  
The last Jewish mayor of the city was its first: Ludwig Landmann served for nine years until 1933, when the Nazis came to power. At the time, the city boasted the second-largest Jewish population in Germany, with 30 000 members.  
Today it has about 7 000 members, according to the community website. Most have come from the former Soviet Union in the past 20 years.  
Feldmann, who reportedly identifies with Liberal Judaism, is a co-founder and active member of the Working Group of Jewish Social Democrats, a five-year-old political caucus. (JTA)

SHABBAT-FRIENDLY ESPIONAGE, ISRAELI STYLE

JERUSALEM - The Israeli military reportedly is incorporating keyboards that can be used by religious intelligence personnel on Shabbat.  
The new keyboards transmit data without opening or closing electrical circuits and therefore do not violate Orthodox standards of Shabbat observance, Israel Hayom reported last Sunday.  
According to the newspaper, the keyboards were developed for the military's intelligence branch, which has incorporated haredi Orthodox volunteers who might hesitate about serving over weekends or Jewish holidays.  
The military declined to comment, citing the secrecy around its intelligence units. (JTA)

CONGRESS FREES UP SOME PA FUNDS

WASHINGTON - The United States plans to release \$88,6 million in development funds for the Palestinian Authority.  
Congress members announced the planned release Friday to the grudging gratification of the PA, which needs the money to stay fiscally afloat.  
In August, Republican lawmakers froze \$147 million in US aid to protest the PA's attempt to sidestep stalled peace talks with Israel and win statehood status at international forums.  
Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Republican Florida), chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, limited the release to \$88,6 million.  
PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad called the release "very important" but told reporters: "The entire sum must be sent... in order to support the Palestinian Authority's budget." (JTA)



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# SA selection for 2013 Maccabiah in full swing

*The Maccabiah has over the years grown into one of the major sporting events in the world. Jewish competitors from all corners of the globe fiercely measure themselves, or their teams, against one another. This competition takes place amidst Jewish camaraderie - the best showcase of what sport is - or should be - all about. South Africa has always played a prominent role - from young boys in a soccer team to the ‘not so young’ in sports such as bowls, competing.*

JACK MILNER

With just over a year to go before the starts of the next Maccabiah, Maccabi South Africa are in full swing in their attempt to sort out the participating teams for the 2013 sport fest. The 19th Maccabiah will take place from July 18 to 30 next year.

The squads have already been selected to represent Gauteng under-15 boys and under-17 girls, with the announcement of the under-17 boys due in the next few days. Preparations for the national junior inter-provincial tournaments, to be held from April 27 to May 1 in Johannesburg, are well under way.

**A newly-launched Maccabi website has all the relevant information.**

Teams from the Western Cape and representatives from other centres around South Africa, will join these teams in a variety of sporting competitions, which also include cricket, squash, netball and tennis.

Training squads will be selected from the teams in the tournament and will act as base squads from which the final teams to represent South Africa in the under-16 boys and under-18 girls and boys teams in Israel, will be chosen.

Those selected for the various teams can find out if they have been selected, either by contacting the conveners for their sports or by visiting the newly launched Maccabi website, [www.maccabi.co.za](http://www.maccabi.co.za), which includes infor-



The SA rugby team in action against Great Britain at the 2009 Maccabi Games in Israel.

mation on the tournament, the various Maccabi sports and next year’s Maccabiah. For more information on the tournament, e-mail [junior@maccabi.co.za](mailto:junior@maccabi.co.za).

This year has seen a drive to increase the level of female participation at the Games and for the first time, two women’s football teams - girls under-18 and women’s open (under-35) will represent South Africa.

There has been enormous growth in women’s football in South Africa, with many clubs now offering the sport as part of their football programmes, as well as both King David and Herzlia entering girls teams into the Inter-Jewish Day Schools event and the school’s annual sporting tours.

**The men’s Futsal trials have recently taken place in Johannesburg and Cape Town.**

All interested players around the country can call Debbie on 082 560 9830 to get more information on the trial dates, which have been scheduled from May.

The men’s Futsal trials have recently taken place in both Cape Town and Johannesburg and the training squad will be announced shortly, via the Maccabi website. Futsal will be sending both a men’s Open (u-35) and Masters (35+) teams to Israel for the first time, with the Open team recently having an introduction to the level required at the Pan American Maccabi Games held in Sao Paulo last December. For more information contact Ronen on [samaccabi.futsal@gmail.com](mailto:samaccabi.futsal@gmail.com) or call 084-665-0655.

## CKNJ stepping in to make a difference

ALANA BARANOV  
PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

Recently Cyclone Irina brought gale-force winds and lashing rain to the east coast of KwaZulu-Natal, but this force of nature also brought together many of the local communal organisations whose members formed a special team to engage in swift collective action to make a positive change in the world.

When the Council of KwaZulu Natal Jewry (CKNJ) was contacted on Tuesday March 13 by the Soul Action Network, an organisation co-ordinating civil society relief efforts, to assist the local charitable initiative SISCO in setting up an emergency street children’s disaster relief shelter in St George’s Street in the Durban CBD, we sprang into action.

Sadly, most of Durban’s street kids often find shelter in the city’s stormwater drains as the only means of protection from both the elements as well as the dangers of the streets.

After the cyclone had hit the city centre, many of these youngsters were found in the stormwater system, having lost all of their meagre possessions, left only with the clothes on their backs. The disaster centre was set up as a temporary place to house and take care of approximately 75 children, some as young as seven, up to the age of 18.

Each story of survival is more heart-breaking than the next and the pressing need to clothe, feed and house the group as soon as possible, was a desperate one.

Operating with a mandate to foster engaging, proactive relationships with the broader society and ensure that our community is a vital part of the Durban landscape, the CKNJ sent out an urgent appeal to the community to contribute goods or make monetary donations to the shelter.

Together with the efforts of the Union



Loading the van with provisions. Maayan Oz; Mikki Norton; Roseanne Rosen; Linda Nathan; Marge Shantal; and Enos Ngongoma.

of Jewish Women’s Durban branch, Project Build, Rotary Club of Durban, The Victor Daitz Foundation, the Lazarus Family Trust, JAM Clothing, Divote and other members of our community, the response to our call was instantaneous and overwhelming.

Within just three days, our community had donated 200kg of maize meal, 10 boxes of groceries, 30 new mattresses and a large amount of clothing. We have also committed to supplying the disaster shelter with fresh vegetables for the children each week for the next two months.

Vice President Linda Nathan and the CKNJ’s Roseanne Rosen went to St George’s Street on Friday March 16, to hand over the goods and visit the shelter. They were touched by the gratitude and heartfelt appreciation shown to the contribution from the Jewish community.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of the community who so generously and speedily heeded our call for assistance and opened their hearts and wallets to the plight of Durban’s street children.

Working together, we made a difference and brought some warmth and comfort to the lives of society’s most vulnerable youths.



# Chag Sameach

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